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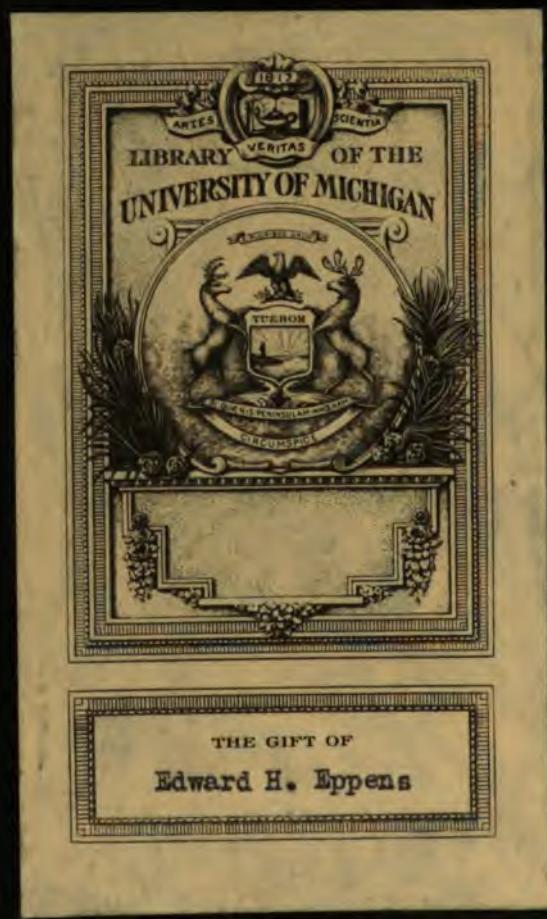
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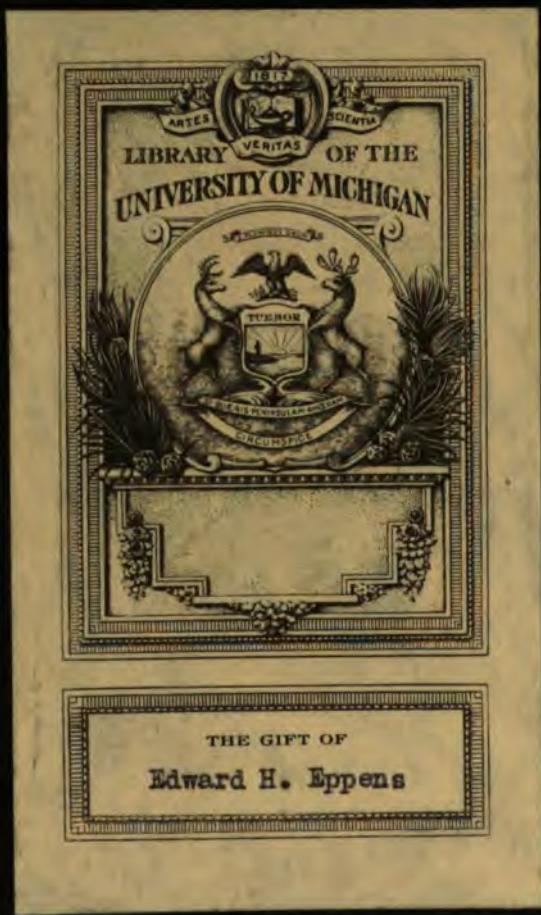
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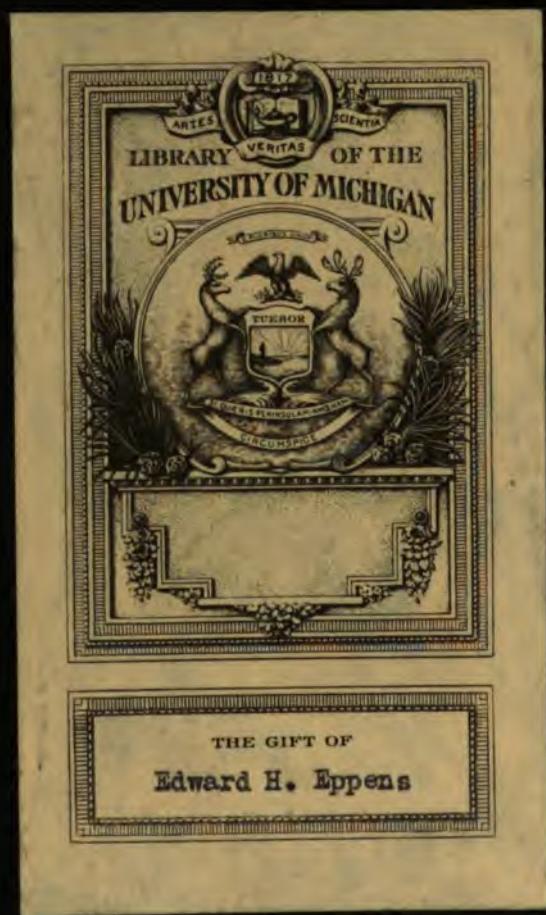
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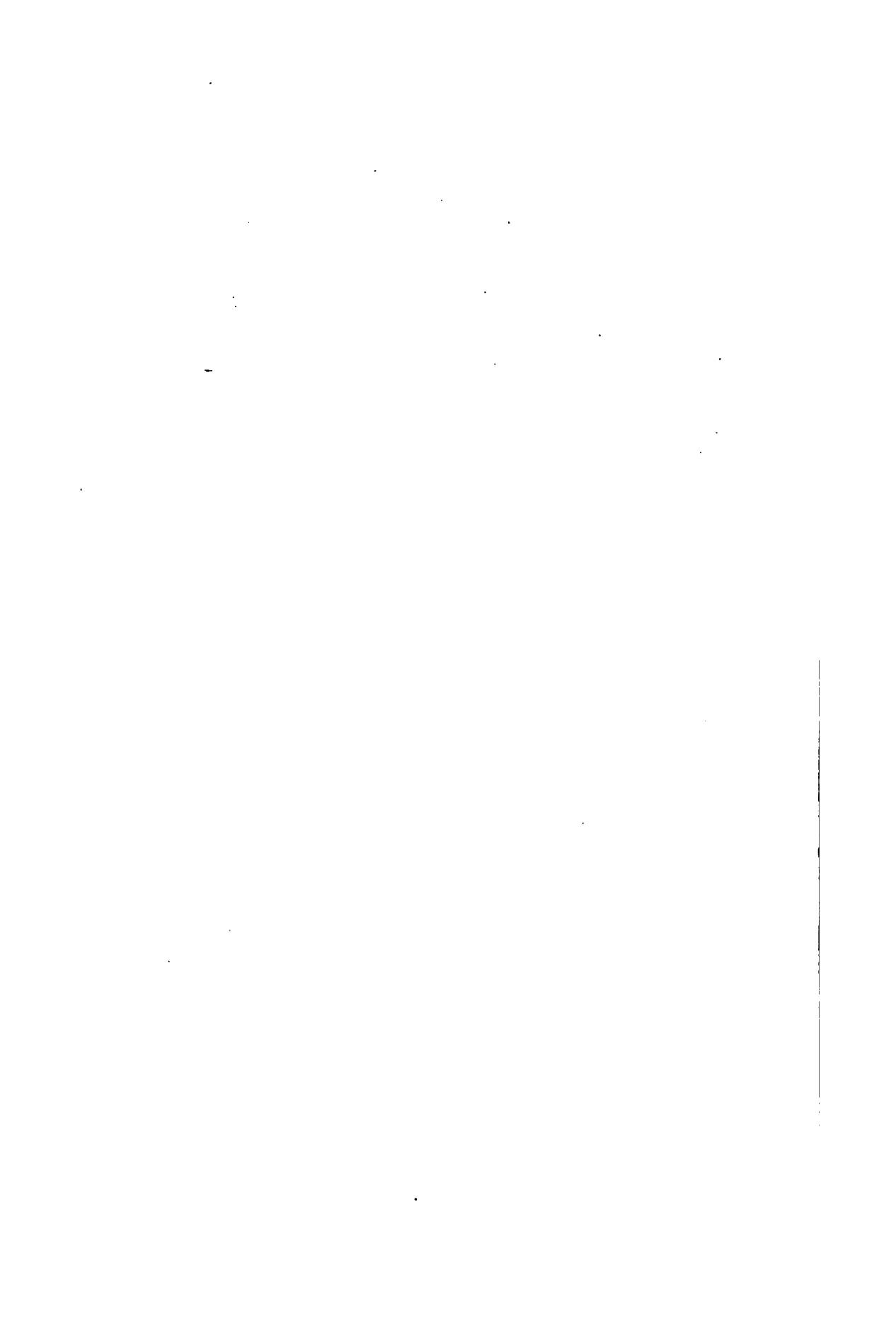












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## NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

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# New Testament Theology

OR

*HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE TEACHING OF JESUS  
AND OF PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY ACCORDING  
TO THE NEW TESTAMENT SOURCES*

BY

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Translated by  
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IN TWO VOLUMES

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## ERRATA



- Page 68, line 7 from top, *read* Mark xiii. 32 *instead of* Mark xiii. 14.  
 " " 12 from bottom, *read* Ex. iv. 22 *instead of* Ex. xxii. 4.  
 " 74, " 13 from bottom, *read* Matt. xi. 25 *instead of* Matt. xxii. 23.  
 " 94, " 17 from top, *read* Luke xiii. 16 *instead of* Luke xvi. 16.  
 " 97, " 8 from top, *read* Matt. x. 8 *instead of* Mark x. 8.  
 " 105, note 1, *read* Matt. xxii. 40 *instead of* Mark xxiii. 40.  
 " 116, line 2 from bottom, *read* Luke xvii. 3, 4 *instead of* Luke xvi. 3, 4.  
 " 141, top line, *read* *ιπιστρίφειν* *instead of* *ιπιστρίφεθαι*.  
 " " line 9 from bottom, *read* Matt. iv. 17 *instead of* Matt. iv. 12.  
 " 173, " 15 from top, *read* Matt. xvi. 21 ff. *instead of* Matt. xxi. 21.  
 " 191, " 8 from top, *read* Luke xii. 8 *instead of* Luke xviii. 8.  
 " 199, " 2 from top, *read* Matt. xxvi. 64 *instead of* Matt. xxiv. 64.  
 " 215, " 6 from bottom, *read* Mark xii. 24, 25 *instead of* Matt. xii. 24, 25.

## PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

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THE following work, which has now the honour of being translated into English, and which contains the main product of many years of theological occupation with the New Testament, has met with a more favourable reception in Germany than I could have expected. Not that my anticipations that it would displease the extreme parties on right and left have been falsified ; for even the moderate party now dominant in Germany, whilst regarding it with more respect, has treated it as alien to itself. All the more encouraging is that practical criticism, which consists in the eager purchase, diligent reading, and warm praise of a book by susceptible readers. This experience pleases me the more that I view New Testament theology as the source destined to rejuvenate our traditional Church and doctrinal systems, concerning the insufficiency of which our age, with all its other differences, is pretty unanimous. There are undoubtedly needs and feelings in England like our own, though, perhaps, the power of orthodox scholasticism may not be so great, and the inclination to abandon tradition and go back to the Holy Scriptures much stronger ; and therefore I hail it as a new sign of the spiritual fellowship of German and English Protestantism, that my effort to promote a deeper and freer conception of the New Testament religion has met with sympathy on the other side of the Channel, and is to gain a wider sphere of influence through a careful and intelligent translation.

Biblical theology, as a science still in its infancy, is liable to more uncertainty as to what exactly are its idea and the limits of its task than any other branch of theological science. And therefore, I am not surprised that the criticisms of my

book, which have hitherto appeared, have been directed mainly against that enlargement of its idea and sphere which is peculiar to my work. It is said that I have modernised to some extent the biblical views, and treated them in a manner too subjective, and in this way have made biblical theology approximate too closely to a biblical dogmatic. This impression is no doubt connected with the fact that to me the doctrinal views of the New Testament are not mere thoughts of past times, but words of eternal truth addressed to us likewise.

But I should regret if this religious attitude of mine, which in itself is surely permissible, were found not only to have shown itself in certain incidental allusions to the prevalent systems of doctrine which have no essential bearing on my task, but also to have disturbed the scientific impartiality and objectivity of my historical account. I have as yet waited in vain for a proof of the latter, for the fact that others expound contested points of the Scriptures in another way than I do is no such proof.

The only English criticism of my book that I have seen is that of Professor Dickson in the *Critical Review*. He has satisfied himself with calling in question the scheme of procedure laid down as necessary for a proper treatment of my task. In spite of his great sympathy with my general theological position and his hearty recognition of my work, this critic decidedly prefers the principles on which the well-known work of Dr. Weiss is constructed, and views the points in which my treatment departs from those principles as peculiarities which lessen the value of my treatise. We, in Germany, prize Weiss' book as the most thorough and complete collection of materials for a historical account of the New Testament religion, but no one can call it a historical account in the proper sense. Not only is the book very hard reading, but one may go through it carefully, and at the end be just as wise as he was before about the religion of the New Testament as a whole. It is undoubtedly used much more as a book of reference than as a book for reading, and there was absolute need of its being supplemented by an entirely different treatment of the subject.

In undertaking this task I have kept well in view the conditions and limitations of a historical presentation. I am

conscious of the wide difference between such a work as C. I. Nitzsch's *System of Christian Doctrine* and a biblical theology which is to treat especially of the New Testament. The work of Nitzsch is a doctrinal system of biblical dogmatic and ethics, drawn indiscriminately from the various Scripture writers; while my task is to examine the several historical accounts of the religion revealed in the New Testament, and exhibit in accordance with this, not what *we* have to believe, but what *Jesus* and His *apostles* believed.

But although there is no dispute about the historical character of biblical theology, yet the idea one has of the way in which history should be written, the high or low conception one forms of historical writing, is matter of importance. Even chronicles are a kind of history, but an imperfect kind, which has ceased to satisfy anyone. At the present day we demand more from history than a mere compilation of notes, carefully selected from the original sources and put in a convenient form. For this would yield no true picture, or at best only a Chinese painting without spirit or life: the actions and thoughts of old times and other nations would remain to us strange and unintelligible. We demand of history a living picture of the unfamiliar life of men in the remote past, not the digging out and exhibition of imperfect mummies, but the mental reproduction of living forms with whom we can think and feel. But to this end a certain translation into our own modes of thought and expression of that which is past and unfamiliar is absolutely indispensable. We must, of course, in the first place transfer ourselves into the past and steep ourselves in it, as my critic demands; yet we must not content ourselves with this, but must seek to revive the past and bring it into the present.

This higher idea of history lies at the basis of all the really important contributions to profane history which our century has made; they may all, from an antiquated standpoint, be reproached with a "modernising" of antiquity. Am I to be blamed for venturing to apply this higher idea of history to the biblical history of religion? Where could it be more applicable than in the case of the Bible, which is meant to present us, not with a record of antiquities, but with imperishable words of eternal life?

These considerations, I believe, completely justify those peculiar principles of procedure which my English critic rejects as unjustifiable and suspicious. The primitive Christian religion as mirrored in the New Testament writings is unquestionably a historical phenomenon, a historical fact and form of life, and the business of biblical theology is to represent it as such. Now this religion lies before us in a small number of popular sketches of the life of Jesus and of some occasional writings of His apostles or companions of His apostles. A procedure such as is demanded by my reviewer, of simply ascertaining and arranging the doctrines that are expressly stated, would be quite insufficient, because that which these sources present, in the shape of formal doctrine, is far from exhausting their religious doctrinal content. How much of what belongs to the religion of the new covenant have we to gather from mere hints, or presuppositions of Jesus and His apostles ! If we were to leave these out of account we would, for example, have, in the case of Paul, no doctrine of God ; in the case of Jesus, no doctrine of man, that is, in either case we would be deprived of one of the two poles between which religion altogether moves. When my critic again and again maintains that biblical theology has to do simply with that which the Bible presents of religious teaching, he overlooks the fact that a great part of that teaching is presented, not in the form of doctrine, but as mere doctrinal material, and that for that very reason we cannot be satisfied with a procedure of merely ascertaining and combining, such as he will alone admit.

But even that which he regards as so suspicious, "the translation" of what we find in the Bible into our own modes of thought and speech, is indispensable. For we are to endeavour to understand what we find in the Bible ; and as we are neither Jews nor Greeks of the first Roman Empire, but Germans or Englishmen of the nineteenth century, how are we to understand without a translation in the widest and deepest sense of the word ? A translation of the biblical speech, in the ordinary sense, into German or English of the present day, is itself a kind of modernising process. But a mere dictionary translation would help us very little, would give us only words without intelligible meaning. There must be

added a mental translation, a transference not merely into our vocabulary, but also into our mode of thought, as speech and thought cannot at all be separated. No doubt this procedure may be abused, and lead to a voluntary or involuntary importation of one's own ideas, but "abusus non tollit usum."

Finally, in asserting that the work of biblical theology can dispense with criticism and divination just as little as any other writing of history, I have no doubt made a statement that is also capable of being greatly misunderstood and abused, but rightly understood it is quite self-evident. Without criticism, that is, without judgment, not merely about the actuality, but also about the importance of the facts recorded, no one can write a history of the New Testament religion, or, in fact, any rational history whatever. Just as little can he do so without divination, that is, without that process of mental creation which out of dissimilar fragments produces a harmonious whole. I understand here by criticism, not indeed a judgment as to what worth particular views in the Bible may have *for us*, but what they signified for Jesus and for Paul themselves; and by "reading between the lines," I mean not a conjectural reading into, but a reading out by divination of what is not expressed but implied. Thus Paul has nowhere given us an exposition of the way in which he conceives it possible to reconcile the existence of the divine government of the world with human freedom, but in a whole series of utterances he forces on us the conviction, that in his opinion such a harmony existed. Have I then done anything superfluous or arbitrary in attempting to divine his solution of the problem from these various references to it?

This extension and deepening of the historical task which is demanded by our age, is, I believe, quite indispensable, though it adds immensely to the difficulties and dangers of the historian's work. Everything, however, depends on these principles being legitimately applied and not abused. In this respect my English critic testifies that I have only made a moderate use of those principles which he regards as suspicious; yet he is of opinion that my book is to be used with care. In this he is certainly right. No historian can rise above a certain subjectivism, for he has only two eyes, and these his

own two eyes, wherewith to see. However, one is just as little protected from this subjectivism by proceeding according to the principles of Weiss' book; but for that, for example, Weiss would not have propounded that entirely onesided conception of the Pauline doctrine of the death of Jesus, which views this death as sufficient only for the taking away of guilt, not for the actual overcoming of sin. Nor would he have ascribed to the apostle that abstruse scheme of salvation, in which there is for man not one means of salvation but two, faith for justification, and baptism for the communication of the Spirit.

It may be that I have not succeeded everywhere in discovering the sense of the original, but have now and again read in my own ideas, and I can only say that I should be truly thankful for any real proof in such cases, in order that it may assist me to improve my judgment and my presentation. In my work I have striven throughout to obtain results not from preconceived ideas, but from authorities honestly expounded, and I claim no more trust on the part of the reader than may be justified by an earnest and strict examination of these authorities. And therefore, with cordial greetings to the English readers who are interested in such work, I would say in the language of the apostle, "Prove all things, and hold fast that which is good."

DR. WILLIBALD BEYSCHLAG.

HALLE, December 1893.

## P R E F A C E

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IN publishing the first half of a work which has been the favourite task of my life, it may be well to present the reader with some preliminary account of the motives and points of view by which I have been guided.

The immediate cause of my preparing a history of New Testament theology was the fact that my *Christology of the New Testament*, published in 1865, had been for some years out of print, and I could not make up my mind to publish a new edition of this fragment of a larger organic whole. That book was my answer to the attacks which Hengstenberg had made upon me, on account of my discourse at the Altenburg Church Conference, with the aim of destroying my theological and ecclesiastical effectiveness. Hurriedly written within nine months, it bore the stamp of its first purpose, and in a new edition I should have had to recast, not indeed the main thought, but a great part of the manner of proof, with the view of getting rid of its strongly defensive and dogmatic character. But a new treatment of the Christological theme, especially after the publication of my *Life of Jesus*, had no attraction for me. On the other hand, the long expressed wish of attached students, as well as the peculiarity of my whole theological training and development, urged me to undertake a complete presentation of New Testament theology. If there is any peculiar gift which I might claim in the sphere of theoretic theology, it is sympathy with the currents of thought in the Bible, especially in the New Testament. This sympathy with the lines of thought in the Bible has kept me free from lifeless scholasticism in theology on the one hand, and from merely destructive criticism on

the other. It has enabled me to find such a unity of faith and knowledge as I was capable of and required, and, at the same time, it has rendered possible that combination of scientific and practical labour in the service of the Protestant Church which has been the soul of my active life.

As in this book I follow in the footsteps of my great teacher, C. J. Nitzsch, who is already almost forgotten, though undeservedly so, I recognise that in view of the present theological and ecclesiastical tendencies my course will be attended with no particular favour. Nay, as my temperament does not allow me to treat matters, which have a far closer interest for me than that of the mere scholar, with the superior coolness which passes with many as the mark of a genuine scientific spirit, my exposition will undoubtedly excite equal displeasure in the opposing wings, both of advanced criticism and traditional dogmatism. I may be allowed here to make some candid acknowledgments to both sides.

No intelligent reader will fail to recognise that I occupy the standpoint of historical criticism as the only possible one to-day for scientific theology in dealing with the Scriptures, and that I unreservedly renounce the inferences drawn from that antiquated theory of inspiration which has done more to encumber the Bible than to illumine it. But yet I feel myself in fundamental opposition to the modern criticism which has been widely prevalent in theological circles since the days of Baur, without, on that account, admitting that I am behind the times. I have learned from Schleiermacher that criticism is an art, which, above all, seeks by thought to restore life to the writing that is to be judged, and to judge it only from the basis of this living reproduction; and I have learned from my honoured teacher Bleek that this art is not to be exercised without a corresponding virtue, the virtue of discretion and diffidence, of reverent feeling towards historical tradition, of discrimination between results that carry probability and idle imaginings that simply cumber the path with rubbish, which the next inquirer has to clear away. It seems to me that since the mighty impression produced and the mighty influence exercised by Baur, critical tools have become a common possession, but the art of using them and its corresponding virtue have been on the wane. It is held to be the

business of criticism to arraign every historical tradition ; it is thought a service to shake conservative positions without putting any better positive understanding of the matter in their place ; people are far more bent on saying something that is new, than on saying something that is tenable. In contrast with this sort of criticism, which brings the art of criticism and whatever is to any degree liberal in the treatment of theology into disrepute, I have indicated in the introductory discussions of my chief sections what, in my opinion, after careful consideration, a sober criticism has to say about the New Testament documents, and hope that my presentation of the biblico-theological results will verify these historic and critical assumptions.

On the other hand, concerning the subject-matter of that presentation, I have to exhibit a great unison in the biblical doctrine of salvation, a substantial agreement even between Paul and the original apostles, and between Paul and Jesus Himself, in all that is important. And I think with this result, if it will stand the test, the good Protestant theologian as well as the simple Bible Christian may rest content. But, except in a very modified way, I have not any scriptural support to proffer for the traditional creed of the Church. I must not only adhere to my christological decisions, advanced five-and-twenty years ago, but must also oppose the traditional juristic doctrine of reconciliation as unbiblical, and maintain a radical distinction between the harmonious biblical doctrines and the current formulæ of the Church. If there are people to-day, as there were people at the time of the Altenburg Church Conference, who should find a want of faith in these results, I must leave them to their standpoint of faith in tradition, perhaps reminding them of the words of an old and very orthodox Church Father: "Christ has said, I am the truth; He has not said, I am the custom." My conviction, which is shared by not a few of the most faithful members and servants of the Church, is, that a renovated expression of our Church doctrine is one of the most urgent duties of the time. No stress laid on practical Christianity, however well meant and warranted it may be, will be of any use unless, with the conscientious earnestness which should be inherent in us as Protestants, we seek to ascertain whether the convictions on

which it rests are really grounded on the truth. I regard it as the most fatal defect of the so-called "mediating theology" to which I rejoice in other points to belong, that, with few exceptions, instead of exercising a courageous and scriptural criticism on the doctrinal tradition of the Church, it now excuses and now conceals its deviations from that tradition. It has also confounded the historical estimate of the Church's dogmatic with an approximate restoration of it, helping thereby to foster the would-be orthodoxy of our day, which, like a somnambulist, goes with its eyes closed on the house-tops of the century. If, indeed, our deviations from the traditional were abatements or diminutions of original Christianity, we would have no right to speak or to exist. But the opposite of this is the case. The biblical mode of teaching is far richer, deeper, more satisfying to the intellect, and the religious and moral life, than the scholastic, and we are only exercising our right as good Protestants, we are only doing our evangelic duty, received from the Reformation, when we go back from scholasticism to the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament, which, during the last century, have been interpreted in accordance with new methods. In this sense, as a modest contribution to the reconstruction of our Church theology, I here submit the results of many years familiarity with the writings of the New Testament, in the hope that though, in the well-known words of the poet, "Nothing will please him who is perfect," there may be some in process of growth who will be grateful for help here as everywhere.

And now a few more remarks about the formal arrangement of my book, as it follows from the scientific and practical tendency which is inseparable from my disposition and mode of thought. As a matter of course, my expositions are concerned with the scientific discussions of the present; but, in order to keep my book from swelling out of proportion, I have restricted to special cases express statements of the views of others, and as far as possible referred to them in notes. I have thought that special reference now and then was due to the much-read book of Dr. Weiss, which in some respects sums up the work hitherto done in this field. It may be hoped that the complaints made in one quarter about my *Life of Christ*, that I did not go deep enough into the exegetical

evidence, will not be repeated here. There is nothing easier than to tumble out the contents of exegetical note-books in such a book as this. But in doing so one mixes up the business of exegesis and history, and makes needlessly large books at a time when already there is of making books no end. I hope that I have given a presentation sufficient for the intelligent reader everywhere of the exegetical basis which alone belongs to a biblical theology, sometimes by express discussions, sometimes by noting the harmony of different facts, sometimes by simple quotation or translation of passages, while the original text is quoted where it is important to have the Greek words. If, on the other hand, many things are introduced which learned experts may find superfluous, I would ask them to remember that I desire to have my book read not merely by such experts, but also by working clergymen and students, as well as—if it should be so fortunate—by cultured laymen who may wish to inquire about the sources of our Christian faith and doctrine. Nevertheless I do not doubt that numerous defects will adhere to this as to my earlier work, springing partly from my personal peculiarity, partly from my scanty and broken leisure within six years, in which I have been forced to complete the book bit by bit. I can only pray that a kindly reception may be given to whatever real help I have to proffer, and that the rest may not be too long dwelt upon. May God, who has allowed me to complete in soundness and freshness of mind this life-work, grant His blessing for this attempt to clear a broader roadway for His truth.

WILLIBALD BEYSCHLAG.

HALLE, 1891.



# NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

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## INTRODUCTION

### § 1. SUBJECT AND PROBLEM

THE question as to the original teaching of Jesus and His apostles has never been entirely set at rest in the course of the Christian centuries. How often has Christendom, unsatisfied, nay, repelled by that which the Church as dispenser of Christian doctrine offered it, raised its eyes to the hills whence help came to the dying world so many centuries before, and gone back from the turbid brooks of a derived tradition to the sources from which the water of life flows forth in its original purity. But the springs rose from wells that were sealed. The Reformation gave men a deeper draught from these springs, and declared the fountain to be accessible to every man. Yet no man who knows what he is saying will maintain that Protestant Christendom to-day has the consciousness of being saturated with the original teaching of Christ, without addition or diminution. The present has only one advantage over every former period of Christendom. It has made the satisfaction of that deep legitimate desire the subject of methodical, scientific work, which is just our biblical and especially our New Testament Theology.

“Biblical Theology,” New Testament Theology,” has become current as an awkward name for a subject of the very first importance,—a name which is explained by the scientific history of its origin, to be referred to further on. For it does not mean a theology which occupies itself with the Bible,—

all branches of biblical study would then have to be comprehended under this name,—but a theology which the Bible itself has and proffers, the theology which lies before us in the Bible. But the Bible contains no “theology” in the strict sense of the word, no scientific doctrine of divine things. It contains religion as distinguished from theology. And that is just its excellence, that it contains pure religion; that, as we believe, it presents the true and perfect religion as distinguished from all subsequent theological manipulation of the same. Consequently, the current name, “Biblical Theology,” can only be maintained by taking theology here in the wider sense of doctrine and doctrinal contents of a religious and moral character, without any scientific form.

But we are met on the threshold by a modern objection to this provisional conception of the matter. Is doctrine, even in this sense, really the essential content of the Bible? Is not its content above all fact and history? As for Christianity in particular, is it not a life in God mediated through Jesus Christ, rather than a doctrine of divine things? The friends of biblical theology have no wish to deny the truth which underlies these statements; but it is a half truth, and therefore liable to be misunderstood. To say nothing of the apostles, who, at anyrate, taught something concerning Christ, or of Paul who was certainly one of the greatest teachers in the world's history, the statement that “Jesus Christ brought no new doctrine, but presented in His person a holy life with God and before God, and in the strength which He drew from that spiritual life He devoted Himself to the service of His brethren in order to win them for the kingdom of God,”<sup>1</sup> is, with all the truth which it contains, one of those misleading statements that oppose things which are not mutually exclusive. No one can deny that Jesus was known by His contemporaries as a “Master,” that is, as a Teacher. His preaching was hailed as a new doctrine (Mark i. 27), and He Himself was conscious that its was His special mission to convey a knowledge of God which was unheard of before Him, and which could not be obtained without Him (Matt. xi. 27). Certainly this knowledge is only the abstract side of the life in God which He unfolds in order to com-

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *History of Dogma*, vol. i. p. 36.

municate ; but this new life is anything but an unconscious one ; nor is it imparted by magic, but clothes itself in idea, word, and preaching, and thus becomes essentially and necessarily a new doctrine of divine things. Nor is it otherwise with the content of Holy Scripture as a whole. No doubt that content is above all things testimony, the attestation of facts of divine revelation ; but in the testimony there is thought, in the fact there is idea. What God reveals of Himself is truth to be thought about and to be proclaimed ; that is, of course, doctrine, or doctrinal content.

This doctrinal content of the Bible must, according to our Protestant principle of Scripture, be the basis of our systematic theology, as well as of our practical preaching. But before we can turn it into the scientific forms of thought of the present day, or bring it to bear in our preaching on the immediate requirements of the Church, it is necessary to realise what was its original shape as it appeared in history. And this is just the task of our biblical theology.

It is therefore the crowning result of our directly biblical studies. Our first duty in coming to the biblical writings, as the historical documents of our religion, is to make ourselves acquainted with their origin, the place and character of their connection with the progress of a historical revelation. This introductory critical task being performed, we search through the several writings once more, word for word, in order to understand them in detail from the general point of view we have gained, and in order to turn their contents to account ; this is the work of exposition. But the multifarious results of this work are, at first, but stones which obtain their full and proper value only when they are joined together in a great structure ; they are elements which have to be restored to that organic connection to which they once belonged, before that more or less fragmentary and incidental literary verification. Now, according as this mental reproduction takes place from the point of view of the fact, or that of the idea, it yields the theological departments of the history of the old covenant, of the life of Jesus, the history of the apostolic age, or again that of biblical theology of the Old and New Testament. Not, indeed, as if the several parts of the Bible apportioned themselves in a purely external way to

the one scientific division or the other, the formally historical parts coming to this, and the formally doctrinal parts belonging to that. That would yield an equally meagre biblical history and biblical theology, as the formal history, quite as much as the intentional teaching in the biblical documents, comes far short of what was really to be narrated and taught. No; to take an example from the Old Testament, while the faith of the Psalmist, the wisdom of the Proverbs, and still more the preaching of the prophets belong to the history of Israel, and indeed present its inmost and most peculiar facts, it is equally certain, conversely, that the religious and moral teaching of the old covenant must be sought not merely in the sayings of Moses and the prophets, but also in the confessions of the Psalms, the sacred institutions, customs, and hopes of the nation. In the same way, it is but a limited part of the New Testament doctrinal content which is purposely developed in the didactic utterances of Jesus and the occasional writings of His apostles; a greater part, perhaps, comes to us but faintly echoed in the form of presupposition or cursory hint, or emerges in the actual conduct of those who teach. But what we have to reproduce is not merely the fragments incidentally worked out in detail, but the whole view of the world as it lived in the hearts of Jesus and His first witnesses.

Accordingly, the idea and function of New Testament theology may be easily and simply expressed. It is the historical presentation of the New Testament religion from its abstract doctrinal side, the scientific restoration of the moral and religious elements of doctrine which existed in the consciousness of Jesus and His first witnesses, and found expression in their words and writings. It is therefore essentially a historical discipline, a branch of theological science which is related to the sacred history of the Bible, very much as the history of dogma is related to the history of the Church.

## § 2. STANDPOINT

Protestant theology undertakes such a presentation under the twofold conviction of the revealed character of the

biblical religion, and the historical character of the biblical revelation. Not that a presentation of the doctrinal contents of the Bible would be impossible without a belief in its origin as higher than that of non-biblical religions. But quite apart from the question whether such a presentation could do justice to the subject, it would therewith sink to the level of a mere chapter in the general history of religion, which could not claim the rank of a special theological department, or any higher value than other chapters of that history. Attempts have been made to treat biblical theology in this way, but that is not the Christian or Protestant standpoint. As Christians we believe that the biblical, and especially the New Testament religion, as distinguished from every other, rests on a divine revelation, and as Protestant Christians we believe that this revelation has found such complete and final expression in the Scriptures, especially those of the New Testament, that their doctrinal contents remain for all time the standard of Christian faith and practice. We therefore regard New Testament theology as not merely a chapter of the general history of religion, in which we may take a human and purely scientific interest, but as an essential means of learning scientifically from the sources the contents of our Christian faith. We regard it as the touch-stone and source from which our Church doctrine is to be renewed, nay, as the indispensable nursery of our whole Church culture. Yet this revealed character of the biblical religion is not to be proved here as a preliminary. So far as this needs to be established scientifically, it belongs to fundamental theology as apologetics; for biblical theology it is only a presupposition on which its mode of treatment is not dependent, but without which biblical religion would be for us an insoluble enigma. It may be sufficient here to call attention to the proof to be given further on. To speak briefly, the idea of revelation is the necessary correlate to the idea of religion. If religion, that is, an immediate personal relation of man to God, has any truth at all, then it postulates the possibility of an opening up of the heart of the eternal God to the heart of man coming to meet Him. That is a possibility which cannot be realised in heathendom, where the heart of man, seeking God, blunderingly grasps the hem

of His garment and mistakes nature, His majestic raiment, for Himself. It can only be realised where the heart of man rising above and beyond nature, grasping something supernatural, ethically absolute and holy, presses beyond God's external manifestations into His essence, as is the case in the religion of the Bible, and only in it. This does not mean that the objective revelation is repeated afresh in the case of everyone who embraces this true religion; it is broadly human in its references; it is a communication to one which is meant for others at the same time,—a communication which is effected in a definite historical place and at a crisis in time in such wise that anyone who would take from the fulness of this perfect communication needs only the subjective appropriation, that is, the subjective revelation of its divine truth. The fundamental Christian experience from the beginning to the present day is, that this process of divine revelation, meant for the whole human race, has really taken place within the limits of Scripture, and reached for all time its highest point in Jesus Christ, as well as that the New Testament writings which testify of Him are genuine documents of God's completed revelation. Christendom draws from the person of its founder by means of these writings which testify of Him a supernatural world-overcoming spiritual life, a satisfaction of the deepest needs of the human heart and of the human race such as can be got nowhere else, and by these Scriptures it is led back from all the errors of its historical course to its original and imperishable sources.

The theology of to-day does not deny what has just been declared about Jesus, but it does partly deny what has been asserted of the New Testament Scriptures. It does not deny the revealed character of Christianity in general, but while recognising it more or less definitely in the personal life of Jesus, does not extend that recognition to the New Testament writings as such. In virtue of a conception of revelation which divests it as far as possible of a doctrinal character, it yet considers that literature with its doctrinal contents as a purely human historical product, as the literary source of a first chapter of the history of dogma, in which as in the later chapters there is a theological treatment of the Christian

facts of revelation, a series of purely human reflections of these facts which are not even consistent with each other. It is manifest that this would completely destroy the significance of the New Testament teaching as a standard for all time, its significance as a great permanent text for the history of dogma, in a word, the Protestant principle of Scripture. Without falling back on the old dogma of inspiration, or wishing to formulate a new one, we must at once declare ourselves opposed to such a view. Although the New Testament writers belong only in part to the original circle of disciples, the apostles who write being, so to speak, in great measure different from those who preached by word of mouth, yet no one will deny that these writings are the oldest documents of Christianity. It has, however, to be proved that they are not genuine accounts of the actual rise of Christianity, and do not stand to the revelation of God in Christ in a relation of descent so immediate and clear, that this revelation may be learned from them pure and undefiled. The impression which Christendom from the first has received, and still receives, from this early Christian literature, fixes a wide gulf between it and the ecclesiastical literature which followed. These original writings are certainly a subject for free critical examination, which may correct many old church traditions; and certainly this criticism will bring to light deutero-canonical fragments, approximating to the uncanonical in the collection which was formed gradually and without science. Yet it can only in the end confirm the judgment of the Church, which has drawn the boundary-line thus and not otherwise—as against the modern attempts to place an Epistle of Clement or the Shepherd of Hermas on the same level with these deutero-canonical fragments. With a sure religious tact, which does not fail even in those cases where the historic tradition was in error about the origin of a book, the old Church has fixed the classic literature of early Christianity, the collection of writings in which it felt the pulse-beat of the period of creation as distinguished from that of elaboration, and elaboration by means alien in spirit. We feel this pulse-beat still. As often as we base a sermon on a text of Scripture we become convinced that the words of Scripture are in point of fact related to the preaching of

the Church at all times, as that of text to commentary. But we may also discern the historical reasons for this abiding distinction and superiority. Christianity at an early period was detached from its Hebrew mother soil and transplanted into the foreign field of Greek culture, where, like a plant in foreign soil, it could not but change its form and be subject to the critical and theologising spirit of the Hellenic schools. But the New Testament embraces that primitive Christian literature which was in existence before that great transition. For these writings are rooted in that mother soil of New Testament revelation, in naïve connection with the Old Testament views which were fulfilled and transfigured in Christ, and they are produced by the prophetic spirit which had its home in Palestine, and which Jesus unsealed afresh. They are thus able to mirror the New Testament revelation to which they stand so near in time, with a directness which all later writings of the Church naturally and necessarily lack.

What is right and legitimate in the view of the New Testament writings which we have just rejected, lies in what we a little while ago designated as the other presupposition of our biblical theology, "the historical character of the biblical revelation." In fact, the biblical religion, together with the sacred writings which attest it, is, in spite of its divine origin, something truly historical, originating according to the laws of human nature. In modern times, in contradistinction to earlier periods, the view has become widely prevalent that development, that great law which we perceive in all natural and spiritual life, belongs also to the sphere of biblical religion, and that within the Bible there is a great progress from the elementary and imperfect to the richer and more complete. And the Bible itself, which proclaims the greatest progress of humanity and history in passing from the old covenant to the new, is very far from raising any objection to this view. Development can only be predicated of what is in some sense imperfect and human, not of what is eternally perfect and divine; and therefore a human and imperfect side of the biblical religion and its documents is, in principle, conceded with that historical view. The sum total of all those various kinds of imperfections, from the want of religious and moral knowledge of the Old Testament men of God up to the defects

of the New Testament tradition which sets Christ before us, the marks of the human which a close examination of the Bible cannot fail to perceive, no longer disconcerts us. That the genesis of the religion of the Bible itself, as well as of its records,—notwithstanding the divine soul in both,—proceeded just as naturally and humanly as any other historical development, we freely admit, and therefore in no way limit the right of historical criticism in either case. But how is this compatible with our belief in a true revelation of God underlying the religion of the Bible, and finding its literary monuments in the Bible? It would not indeed be compatible with this belief if we were to retain the earlier view of the revealed religion of the Bible as something abstractly divine and not as something divine-human; or if with an awkward antiquated conception of religion we were to regard revelation as an aggregate of doctrines which are communicated by God to the human spirit ready made,—which that spirit could not of itself discover,—and Holy Scripture as the infallible rule sent down from heaven which contains these doctrines. A view which requires the first page of the Bible to contain the same pure doctrine as the last, and will not allow any mention of human imperfections, or even of different individual conceptions of the one doctrine, would justify the reproach that such a revelation does violence to the human spirit, and surprises it with communications which it cannot even truly appropriate. But instead of this, we now understand by revelation, in consequence of our better knowledge of the nature of religion, rather an awakening and enlightening of the inmost life of the soul, a divine fertilisation of all in the inner man that has affinity with God, which certainly affects and fully engages his intellect also, but does not overwhelm it by thrusting upon it a doctrine above the reach of reason. We understand by it a self-communication of the Divine Spirit to the human such as is in keeping with the nature of religious intercourse with God, and is conditioned of itself by the measure of human receptivity and capacity.

Accordingly, the course of the divine revelation, as it completes itself for the whole of humanity and history within definite historical limits, must be a more and more inward union of the Holy Spirit of God with the devout human

spirit, and the offspring of this union, the religion of revelation, will naturally and necessarily bear divine as well as human features. The revelation of God can only be perfected in the climax of this course of history where an ideal humanity presents itself as a vessel for God's eternal fulness, and even here it is at the outset a heavenly glory in an earthly servant form. It must at the beginning come down to the deepest poverty and feebleness of man, and thence, stage by stage, increase the receptivity to which it can more and more fully impart itself in ever richer communications. And that is just how it is in the artlessly composed Bible history. The divine revelation addresses itself to those men pre-eminently religious, who then turn what they have received to account in the founding of a community, and out of this community again issue those who can receive a higher stage of revelation. The smoking flax of true religion is nursed into flame in the hearth of a family and tribe community by the childlike intercourse with the living God which an Abraham cultivates in the midst of a world sinking into heathenism. From this proceeds Moses, to whom the Eternal appears in the fiery flame of His holiness, and he makes his vision of God the basis of a national community, a divine commonwealth in Israel. From this national community again proceed the prophets, the living conscience of the nation, to whom God makes Himself known in an ever clearer light, and whom He, in view of the downfall of the outer commonwealth of God, convinces of His eternal love and faithfulness, with which He will yet crown His work in Israel. From them at length the quiet community of the poor and suffering draw their living hope in the deepest outward ruin of the nation, and thus become the historical environment of Him in whom the gracious fulfilment comes down from heaven, the Son of Man and Son of God, whose perfect humanity filled with divine love became the fit vessel and instrument for a revelation which was to master the world. And even He, the perfect one and the perfecter, could only speak in the forms of His time and people, could only speak from the course of an as yet incomplete life-work, and was forced in a sense to be His own prophet. His life in its completed issue has, so to say, outstripped His teaching, and therefore could only sufficiently

be made the subject of expository preaching by His disciples and successors. These also, in the form of their culture, being in diverse ways children of their age, are again differently affected by their disposition and mode of life, in their exposition of the Saviour's life, so as to give a peculiar aspect of the common theme in the preaching of each. All this enables us to describe the divine revelation, not, of course, in its abstract divinity,—in this it remains the indescribable, mysterious source of the historical revelation that is to be exhibited,—but the biblical revelation in its divine human aspect, the religion of revelation bearing the stamp both of the eternal and the temporal.

### § 3. SKETCH OF THE TREATMENT OF OUR SUBJECT UP TO THE PRESENT

This human and historical nature of the biblical religion has not at all times been prized as it should within the Church; in fact, the Church for long failed to apprehend it, and therefore biblical theology, in the sense described above, has only of late become possible. The human, historical nature of the Bible came to be completely misapprehended, not only by conceiving the divine revelation in a onesided and exaggerated way as doctrine above reason, but by directly confounding it with its literary productions and documentary attestations, viz. the biblical writings. The Bible, from beginning to end, had to be the uniform oracular book of revealed doctrine. That did not promote, but prevented the understanding of it. The presupposition that the Bible must everywhere teach with the same divine perfection, caused the Church to fall into the most arbitrary allegorical exposition, and in spite of appeals to Holy Scripture made the Church's doctrine more and more unlike the announcement of salvation which Scripture contains. The reformation certainly went back in earnest to the Scriptures, re-established principles of reason for its exposition, and would allow nothing to be regarded as Church doctrine but the biblical gospel. But it suffered so much of that erroneous assumption to remain, as might render a more biblical dogmatic possible, but not a historical knowledge of the doctrinal contents of the Bible.

And the rigidity of the Protestant system of doctrine soon led back to a new scholasticism which again closed the Bible that had scarcely been opened. If Melanchthon and Calvin developed their dogmatic text-books immediately from the Scriptures, especially from the Epistles of Paul, their successors did not continue on this path, but rather based their dogmatic on the creeds of the Church, contenting themselves with confirming the doctrines thence deduced with biblical *dicta probantia*, proof passages taken without distinction from different parts of Scripture, and torn out of the connection to which they belonged. It was therefore reserved for the time of the decay of this Protestant scholasticism, and the beginning of the historical and critical study of the Bible, to advance gradually to the idea of a biblical theology as now understood. Genuine friends of orthodoxy were the first, from a sense of the insufficiency and obsoleteness of its scholastic form, to endeavour to regenerate it from the utterly neglected Bible, and thus did the name biblical theology—in the sense of a biblical as distinguished from a scholastic dogmatic—first become current in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Büsching of Göttingen advanced the idea of a *theologia e solis literis sanctis concinnata*, and wrote “of the advantage of biblical dogmatic theology over scholastic” (1756–1758); and Zachariä, who likewise taught in Göttingen, composed (1775 ff.) a “*Biblical Theology, or Examination of the Biblical Grounds of the principal Christian Doctrines.*” That which was here meant to be a new support of the dogmatic of the Church came to undermine it, as rationalism soon succeeded orthodoxy dying of old age. Bahrdt and Ammon started from the same didactic conception of the Scriptures as the orthodox, but applied it in their own rationalistic sense, and therefore the old traditional violence to the meaning of Scripture for the sake of a dogmatic system, seemed as if it were only to be replaced by a new kind of violence. It was in these circumstances that the Altorf theologian J. Ph. Gabler clearly disentangled the matter in his academic lecture “*de justo discrimine theologieæ bibliæ et dogmaticæ*” (1789), by putting the two entirely different questions: “What in point of fact do the Scriptures teach?” and “What is dogmatic truth for us?” This cleared the way for an impartial dogmatic and

purely historical examination of Scripture,—a way which about the same time the pioneer labours of Semler had opened from another side. The conception of biblical theology as historical science, as the historical presentation of the doctrinal contents of the Bible, was found.

In this sense Lorenz Bauer of Altorf first produced a *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (1796–1800), with the addition of a Biblical Ethic (1804). According to him biblical theology is “a simple representation, purged from all foreign notions, of the religious theories of the Jews before Christ, and of Jesus and His apostles, deduced from their writings according to the different periods and views of the writers.” By distinguishing not only Old and New Testament, but also the theology of the different authors, he already in point of form carries out the historical view. This indeed leaves much to be wished as regards the subject-matter, as the author, looking through rationalistic spectacles, makes arbitrary distinctions between doctrinal contents of universal validity and mere ideas of the time, or accommodations. Kaisers’ *Biblical Theology, or Judaism and Christianity* (Erlangen, 1813), does not go much beyond Bauer. The author, from a philosophical standpoint of the time (afterwards abandoned), wished to treat the religion of the Bible as a special chapter of a critical history of comparative religions. On the other hand, de Wette’s *Biblical Dogmatic of the Old and New Testaments* (1813 ; 2nd ed. 1830), marks a real advance in the impartial estimate of what is properly biblical. By undertaking to represent the Christian religion in its relation to the Jewish culture of the time, just as the dogmatic of the Church represents it in relation to the culture of to-day, de Wette, notwithstanding the title dogmatic, rather gave a history of dogma within the Bible. It treats separately of Old and New Testament, dividing the former into Hebraism and Judaism, and the latter into the teaching of Jesus and that of His apostles ; the idea of religion which is thereby set up is at least more in harmony with the biblical than the old rationalistic idea. De Wette’s successors, Baumgarten-Crusius and v. Cölln, start from a similar standpoint. The former, indeed (*Outlines of Biblical Theology*, 1828), by failing to distinguish any period, not even keeping Old and

New Testament apart, reverts to the standpoint of biblical dogmatic. The latter (*Biblical Theology*, edited by D. Schulz, 1836) adheres to the division of de Wette, and supports it with a more abundant learning. The influence of Schleiermacher, the great renovator of our theology, which is from this time perceptible, is at first only indirect within our province, as a fresh and biblical dogmatic was sought on the new footing in religion and theology with far better results than in the transition time of the eighteenth century. Among a series of works of that kind stands out the really biblical *System of Christian Doctrine*, by C. I. Nitzsch. But this greatest of Schleiermacher's successors has also directly fostered biblical theology, by introducing it into the circle of his academic lectures. His thoughtful sketch distinguishes in the Old Testament the patriarchal, the Mosaic, the prophetic, and the Judaistic stage; in the New Testament, the teaching of Jesus and that of His apostles. Each stage has a historical introduction, and is divided into ontology, doctrine of salvation, and ethics. The separate consideration of the several apostolic modes of teaching, which is still wanting here, was in the meantime commenced in the treatment in monographs of a Pauline or Johannine system of doctrine (the former by Usteri and Dähne, 1832 and 1838; the latter by Frommann, 1839), and was advanced by Neander in particular, who in his *Apostolic Age* attempted to present the teaching of James, Peter, Paul, and John according to psychological differences in their character. From a similar standpoint—besides lesser works of the school of Neander—is the much-used *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, by Chr. F. Schmid, of Tübingen (edited by Weizsäcker, 1853), a work which also treats of the history of Jesus and of the apostles, and methodically treats the doctrinal systems of the latter according to their different position to the law and the prophets.

Henceforth the development of New Testament theology is mainly affected by the impulse given by Chr. F. Baur. Whatever objections may be taken to his constructive conception of the early Christian situation, Baur has opposed to the merely individual distinctions of Neander great historical contrasts and stages of development, and carried out even wrong views with such ability and acuteness, that partly by

the successors whom he inspired, partly by the contradiction he evoked, the investigation of biblical theology has been lifted to a new height, and, in particular, the perception of the actual state of things has been rendered more acute. The separate investigation either of definite systems or special heads of doctrine, has increased beyond all reckoning since Baur's time. The biblico-theological development of his view of history fell at first to prominent disciples : Schwegler in his post-apostolic age, Hilgenfeld and K. R. Köstlin in their writings on the Johannine system of doctrine, Holsten in his *Gospel of Peter and Paul*, etc. The lectures of the master on New Testament theology, delivered from 1852–1860, only appeared after his death (1864). They will always be memorable as the practical manifesto of a historical and literary criticism which made the picture of Jesus a wavering shadow, the primitive apostles Jewish refiners of the law, and the Apostle Paul the real creator of Christianity. Eduard Reuss, in his *Histoire de la théologie chrétienne au siècle apostolique*, perhaps the ablest discussion of the subject we possess, though it be somewhat sketchy, has shown, on the other hand, how far the opinions advanced by Baur may be modified by an impartial estimate of their elements of truth in favour of a standpoint which is both more religious and more historical. Apart from the healthy development into which Reuss has guided back our science, there remain the contemporary works of Lutterbeck and von Hofmann. Lutterbeck's *New Testament System of Doctrine*, 1852, only illustrates how incapable a pupil of Catholic theology is, though scholarly and intellectually free, of finding his way in this Protestant problem and discussion. And von Hofmann's *Biblical Theology of the New Testament* (edited by Volk, 1886), the fragment with which he closed his well-planned but perverse *Bible Studies*, suffers from the delusion that it is possible to write a history of the New Testament revelation in its pure divine objectivity, instead of a history of the New Testament religion of revelation, an undertaking which could only result in a greater display of the human and subjective. The merit of having freed our science from Baur's scheme of history has been earned by Albrecht Ritschl in the second edition of his book on the *Old Catholic Church*, 1857. His own positive theology

was not derived from biblical principles, but only sought to put itself in agreement with the teaching of Scripture, with scholarly though sometimes violent acuteness (in the second volume of his *Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*). *The New Testament Theology*, by Immer (1875), and the works of Pfleiderer (*Paulinism*, 1873, and *Das Urchristenthum, seine Schriften und Lehren*, 1874), move, so far as the intervening change of the scientific situation permits, on the lines of Baur, yet variously modifying Baur's position, and, as is specially the case with Pfleiderer's *Paulinism*, taking an independent view. H. Cremer, in his painstaking *Biblical Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek* [Trans. T. & T. Clark], has furnished a very valuable aid for the examination of details, strongly influenced, of course, by orthodox tradition. But the most important recent appearance in our province is the *Biblical Theology* of Weiss [Trans. T. & T. Clark], which has run through five editions since 1865. In extensive knowledge of the literature, carefulness, and thoroughness in the preparatory exegetical work, in the completeness and distinctness with which the material is set forth, this meritorious work will be difficult to surpass, and he who undertakes to confront it with a new treatment of the subject will have to give a satisfactory account of the reasons which have moved him to do so.

#### § 4. QUESTIONS OF METHOD

The impulse to this undertaking lies for us, not merely in the distinction of a free historical presentation from the rigid form of a manual composed in paragraphs with their elucidations, nor even merely in a considerable number of details in which our judgment about the actual teaching of the New Testament, sometimes in the most important articles of doctrine, differs from that of Weiss, but especially in a somewhat different conception of the task itself, which compels us to differ entirely, both as to arrangement and execution, from that manual which at present rules our subject. We may therefore be allowed to begin our preliminary observations on that task.

The problem of working out a historical presentation of the New Testament religion from those definite canonical sources,

requires a union, as far as possible, of the historic and literary treatment. In Weiss' Manual the historical treatment of the material seems to us to be unduly subordinated to the literary. In his paragraphs and elucidations the raw material furnished by exegesis is indeed set forth with great completeness and in good order, but it is not combined into great living forms. And yet it is the highest task of writing history to set forth the results obtained from an investigation of the sources, not merely as a well-arranged collection of raw material, but to restore from that the living image itself, the fragmentary evidence of which lies before us in these results. I know, indeed, that the application of this highest historical duty to New Testament theology creates the danger and temptation of importing something of one's own into the doctrinal system that is to be described. But not only is this danger in no way excluded by that literary treatment—it is a risk that must be incurred in the writing of history. Hence it follows that we have rights and duties which are not recognised in the Manual of Weiss. In the first place, history is, and remains, according to its nature, the subjective reproduction of what is in itself objective and alien to us. But how is this extraneous matter to become intelligible to me, and become my own, unless I somehow translate it into the mode of thought and speech of the present day? Even the religious doctrines of the New Testament which grew up on the soil of a foreign nationality, and are parted from us by eighteen centuries, must be translated—certainly with the utmost possible care not to subtract or add anything to them—into the thought and speech of the present day, if they are not to remain for us obscure oracles with a strange sound. Further, it seems to me to be closely connected with this, that there must be a part taken in biblical theology by two powers, which, as far as I can see, Dr. Weiss excludes from it, the powers of criticism and divination. Criticism, not, of course, in the sense of asking whether or how far the doctrinal contents of the New Testament can hold good, even for us to-day, as dogmatic truth, but in the sense of examining the question as to what value a definite view has for the biblical preacher himself; whether it is an outcome of his own spiritual life, or a traditional heritage; whether it is for him kernel or

husk ; and whether it exhaustively expresses his own thinking on a definite point of doctrine, or is perhaps only one of the ways in which he views it,—a view and an estimate of one side of the matter. And as to divination, without which there can be no such thing as history, because without a certain reading between the lines the sources, always scanty and fragmentary, never yield a living whole, where could it be more indispensable, used with all possible caution, than just here,—here, where the object is to elicit a view of the world from the discourses of Jesus handed down to us in a concise selection, or from the fugitive writings of His disciples, consisting at most of but a few pages, and that view of the world in each case assuming an individual form. If beyond dispute Jesus gave His teaching with greater fulness than the reproduction of it in the Gospels, if the apostles have, from a much more many-sided world of ideas, used particular trains of thought to meet particular circumstances, the task of correspondingly reproducing the primitive Christian doctrine from the New Testament imperatively demands that we should not merely render the trains of thought that lie before us, but also that from bare hints, from what is unspoken but implied in the didactic utterance, we should guess at the world of thought of the biblical teachers.

Another characteristic feature of that treatment, which is more literary than historical, is the way in which Weiss' Manual sets up almost as many systems of doctrine as there are books in the New Testament, while justice is not done to the teaching of Jesus. The Pauline system is treated in four parts, according to the Thessalonian Epistles, the four great doctrinal and controversial Epistles, the Epistles of the captivity, and, finally, the Pastoral Epistles ; while the teaching of Jesus is briefly discussed, not according to the four Gospels, but only according to a supposed oldest source (the Synoptists). That seems to me an excess and a deficiency. We expect from a New Testament theology, above all, an account of the teaching of Jesus, not merely so far as it is the presupposition of the apostolic systems, as Weiss regards it, but a presentation of the teaching of Jesus for its own sake. The teaching of Jesus is to us a main fact of New Testament theology, if not precisely the main fact, which, as

a matter of course, should be treated according to all the accounts of it that we have, not merely according to an account conjectured by the critic to be the oldest, not even according to the Synoptists merely, if we regard the Gospel of John as an apostolic report—as Dr. Weiss does. As to the Pauline system, on the other hand, we do not want a doctrinal abstract from the several types of the apostle's letters, but a survey as far as possible of the Pauline world of ideas, in their connection, their unity and many-sidedness, and therefore we must, here also, take collectively all the genuine documents we have. If we get the impression that the doctrinal thoughts of the apostle continued to develop in particular points, we must note that in its place, but we must not on that account build the Pauline system of doctrine three or four times. In that case we would have to extract it directly from each several Epistle, as there may be perceived certain differences between the Epistle to the Romans and that to the Galatians. But the distinction—and we make this remark not so much against Weiss' book as quite generally—must be kept within limits if the total impression of the subject is not to suffer and become distorted. While it is certainly right to keep separate, not only the teaching of Jesus and that of the apostles, but also the teaching of James, Peter, Paul, and John, and to consider each of them, not according to an abstract dogmatic scheme, but from his peculiar point of view, it is as certainly incumbent on us to throw into bold relief the great amount of unison in all these different doctrinal utterances. Such a unison exists, and in a larger measure than our onesided modern method of hunting after formal differences is willing to admit. The men of the New Testament were conscious of proclaiming a uniform gospel, though in different tongues, and it is the duty of New Testament theology to give a presentation of this unity in its diversity.

Weiss has undoubtedly adopted his peculiar method in view of the present condition of questions concerning New Testament Introduction. He has very adroitly taken all the views of modern criticism into account in his arrangements. While he contests the whole of these critical judgments, even in the case of the Pastoral Epistles and the Second Epistle of

Peter, yet he himself gives countenance to doubts about the Gospel of John by excluding it from the sources of our knowledge of the teaching of Jesus, and likewise to attacks on the Pauline Epistles of the captivity, by separating them from the great doctrinal and controversial Epistles. And who could deny that the present state of criticism of the New Testament writings furnishes peculiar difficulties for biblical theology, and that this theology must take fitting account of that condition of the question of sources? Yet I am of opinion that the historian has not to be guided by foreign judgments about his sources, at least not by those which he regards as decidedly false, but that he must lay at the basis of his structure his own well-considered opinion on the matter. If I regarded the Pastoral Epistles as non-Pauline, or the Second Epistle of Peter as spurious, I should then make no use of them in my presentation of Pauline or Petrine systems of doctrine, but would have to take notice of them in those passages of my history of doctrine where I fancied them to have arisen, and would therewith prove the correctness of my view of history. And if I regarded the Gospel of John as a genuine record of the teaching of Jesus, I would have to make use of it for the knowledge of this teaching, and not merely turn it to account as an expression of its author's ideas. Not that we are, on that account, to take no notice of the important distinction between the synoptic and Johannine account of the teaching of Jesus. I may regard the Gospel of John as decidedly apostolic, and yet recognise that his reports of speeches have passed through a strong medium of subjective reconstruction. I will therefore give a separate account of the teaching of Jesus according to the Synoptists and John, and so leave the biblico-theological records to be settled by the yet undecided controversy about the Gospel of John. In the same way, I may consider it possible that the Apocalypse and the Gospel of John belong to the same author, and yet guard against treating the doctrinal contents of both as material of the same Johannine system of doctrine. The critical question is too largely an open one, and, on the other hand, the circle of ideas in the two writings is too diverse to warrant us in treating as a harmonious world of ideas that which, at anyrate, could only

belong to very different stages of development of the same author.

This already decides certain main questions regarding the systematic arrangement of our material. We will not only distinguish the teaching of Jesus from that of His apostles, but also the teaching of Jesus according to the Synoptists and according to John, and not only keep apart a primitive apostolic, a Pauline and Johannine system of doctrine, but also treat quite separately the doctrinal system of the Apocalypse and also of James, First Peter, and the Epistles to the Hebrews. We may be in doubt as to the order of succession of the doctrinal systems of the Epistles, especially if we regard them, as a whole, as productions of the same first century. A purely chronological succession cannot be exhibited, as we are anything but certain as to the earlier or later origin of some of the Scripture writings. The comparatively late composition of one of these writings would not, however, prove that the mode of thought underlying it could not have been matured just as early or earlier than that of a younger contemporary who happened to write before. A succession according to the lower or higher degree of doctrinal development seems therefore to be the preferable one. The moving principle of the development of early Christian doctrine is the need of an understanding with Judaism. This characteristic would give us a rising gradation of ever more richly developed modes of teaching. Paul, the strictest arbiter between Judaism and Christianity, and at the same time the most doctrinal of the New Testament writers, would then necessarily close the series, and even the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Johannine system, and, still more, James and Peter, would have their place before him. And this succession, opposed as it would be to the modern critical tendency, would, in point of fact, have the advantage of truly setting forth, in comparison with Paul, the inner affinity between the mode of thought of the primitive apostles on the one hand, and the Epistle to the Hebrews and Johannine writings on the other: an affinity notwithstanding great differences really exists, though as a rule it is not recognised. Nevertheless, that point of view of an understanding with Judaism does not yet give a satisfactory principle of division, as the need for it, in the case of

the Christians, falls into the background after the destruction of Jerusalem : even decidedly post-Pauline systems of doctrine, and in comparison with Paul, of a less developed character, may be unaffected by this need. And thus a certain accommodation between the chronological arrangement, and that according to tenor seems to be necessary. It is best to place the great Pauline system of doctrine in the middle of the apostolic age, to which at anyrate it belongs in time, and to let it be preceded by a primitive apostolic stage, and followed by one more developed. We shall hardly be contradicted if we construct the latter group from the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Apocalypse, and other Johannine remains ; but there will not be the same readiness to allow us to place the discourses of the earlier part of the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles of James, and First Peter before Paulinism. We might, in fact, hesitate about the position of the First Epistle of Peter, not so much on account of the prevalent attacks on its genuineness, as because, even on the assumption of its genuineness, it is probably of post-Pauline date, and not unaffected by Paul in its mode of teaching. However, this mode of teaching still seems predominantly pre-Pauline, related to that of James no less than that of Paul. It stands to the Petrine speeches of the Acts of the Apostles in a relation of the simplest development of their mode of thought, so that the reasons preponderate for placing it—just where the historical Peter stood—midway between James and Paul. There still remains in this arrangement of New Testament doctrinal systems a residue which yields no coherent presentation of Christianity, but only elements of such a presentation : Matthew, Mark, and Luke, so far as they are not mere narrators, but disclose some views of their own, the Epistle of Jude, the Second Epistle of Peter, and the Pastoral Epistles. We shall gather up in a closing group the doctrinal elements which appear in these writings as fragmentary witnesses of a common Christian view, partly of the apostolic and partly of the immediately post-apostolic period ; a supplement to the great original doctrinal formation of the apostolic circle, and the natural transition to the doctrinal development of the old Catholic period.

### § 5. THE QUESTION AS TO AN OLD TESTAMENT, JUDAISTIC PREVIOUS HISTORY

There still remains one final preliminary question before we come to our main subject. Every period of history whose presentation we may undertake has a preparatory history in which its roots somehow lie, and therefore every historical undertaking usually begins with a review of that preparatory history. Is it necessary for us to proceed in the same way here in the case of New Testament theology? There can be no doubt that the teaching of the New Testament, with all the originality of revelation which it claims, has a historical presupposition and preparatory stage—the religious teaching of the Old Testament. The gospel unfolds itself within a national community, which already has a religious history of two thousand years behind it, and it is throughout connected with the religious possessions of this community and with the results of its history. Its views of God and of the world, of sin and law, of the blessing and way of salvation, of the kingdom of God and its Bearer the Messiah, are all rooted in the Old Testament. The apostles look upon the Old Testament as Holy Scripture even for the Christian communities. They verify their teaching by it, and Jesus Himself brings His preaching into the closest relation to the law and the prophets. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt. v. 17). This fulfilling does not indeed leave the Old Testament views and doctrines as they were, but distinctly advances and transforms them. There is not an idea in the New Testament which is not somehow rooted in the Old, but there is not an idea in the Old Testament which does not become something essentially new and higher in the New.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, Jesus and His apostles consider the Old Testament in a light in which its own authors did not consider it, in the light of that new and perfect revelation of which also it is truly said: "Old things have passed away, behold all things have become new." It is questionable whether this relation demands a preceding presentation of Old

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Oehler, *Old Testament Theology*, p. 66; H. Schultz, *Old Testament Theology* [both Trans. T. & T. Clark].

Testament theology as an Introduction to New Testament theology. Nothing, of course, but a sketch of the former could be attempted, for a searching and detailed presentation would be no Introduction, but an independent work which would require a special call and training. But a mere sketch would only offer that which the reader of a New Testament theology already has, a general survey of the Old Testament history of religion. It could not offer the very thing that would chiefly make it helpful to New Testament theology, viz. the Old Testament roots of the several New Testament concepts and notions. In these circumstances it seems allowable, and even imperative, to represent the New Testament theology in its actual novelty without further preface, and only bring out at each step in its exposition the distinction as well as the connection it has with that of the Old Testament.

But must we not at last give an introductory presentation of the final stage of the religious history of Israel, that condition of the Jewish religion which the nascent Christianity finds existent and from which it separates? There can be no question that the religious thought and life of the Jewish people was not stationary from the time of the origin of the latest Old Testament canonice writing. Though the period when this writing originated be much later than Jewish tradition asserts, not in the Persian, but in the Maccabean age, yet the writings of the last half-century before Christ, the biblical Apocrypha and the non-biblical pseudepigrapha, as well as the writings of Philo and Josephus, and above all the New Testament itself, testify to a movement of mind surging round the nascent Christianity, quite different from what the latest psalmists and prophets would lead us to expect. And, assuredly he who undertakes to write a history of the origin of Christianity, and in particular the life of Jesus, will not be at liberty to omit a description of this historical soil, just because the history of the birth of the gospel is completed in the reciprocal action between it and that which was transplanted into it from above. But it is quite a different matter when our task is to present the original doctrinal ideas of Christianity in their historical development. This doctrinal development has almost no connection at all with the peculiar

teaching of the Judaistic period; at anyrate, the connection is such that the Judaistic world of ideas, in itself meagre and obscure, does not throw any special light upon the understanding of it. Of course, Jesus is formally a child of His people and time, so far as concerns His world of ideas and His speech. He also makes use of such forms of presentation as became current only in the post-canonic age, such as, above all, the concept of the kingdom of heaven or kingdom of God. And the apostles likewise, especially Paul, are here and there in their Christological views fond of using theologoumena of the Jewish schools, such as "the creative word," "the hypostatic image," "the spiritual Adam," "the man from heaven." Jesus and His apostles may also have made use of a series of prophetic and eschatological views which are reproduced in the Jewish Apocalypses. Yet all these are but forms of thought and presentation, into which they are the first to breathe any spirit at all, and especially the new Christian spirit of which their Jewish predecessors had no idea. Notwithstanding these meagre and purely formal connections, we have, speaking generally, rather a relation of opposition to the Judaistic doctrines and modes of thought. We shall find that Jesus kept Himself completely independent of the different tendencies and modes of thought which prevailed among the Jewish people of His day; that He was engaged in a war of death and life with that one which was predominant, the Pharisaic and Rabbinic; and that He recognised the one contemporary appearance with which He had any affinity, John the Baptist, as His forerunner, but not as His leader and master. It was from the first a main feature of His teaching, which His disciples also received from Him, to pass beyond the ideas of post-canonic development to the canonical, biblical, and specially prophetic, from the Pharisaic precepts of men to the living word of God (cf. Mark vii. 1 f.).

From all this it may already be seen that a preliminary development of the Judaistic didactic ideas, especially of the Pharisaic and Rabbinic, is in no way indispensable to the understanding of the teaching of Jesus and His apostles, quite apart from the fact that we have not sufficient sources at our command to gain a clear conception of the state of pre-

Christian ideas of the time.<sup>1</sup> We may therefore disregard such a so-called historical preface to New Testament theology with a good conscience, and allow that to speak to us in all its novelty and originality which, at all events, bears in itself the character of novelty and originality in a greater degree than anything else in the whole history of the world.

<sup>1</sup> The very praiseworthy presentation by Weber of the "Altsynagale Theologie" brings to view only a decidedly post-Christian stage of development.

# BOOK I

## THE TEACHING OF JESUS ACCORDING TO THE SYNOPTISTS

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### CHAPTER I

#### INTRODUCTORY

FROM an early period Christendom directed its attention more to the significance of Christ's person and work than to the significance of His teaching. The former occupies throughout the foreground even in the apostolic speeches and Epistles, while there is little reference to His words; and the Church since then, even the Protestant, preaches, indeed, a doctrine about Christ, but only looks, as it were in passing, at Jesus' own teaching, in the doctrine of His prophetic office, which seems as though it were but introductory to His priestly and kingly offices. An opposite current has indeed set in in recent times. An effort has been made to insist upon the teaching of Jesus, as contrasted with the doctrine about Christ, as Christianity proper; but this procedure has not been able to parry the reproach of explaining Christianity away. What is the right and true attitude here? As it seems equally questionable to impute to Christendom a thorough misunderstanding of that on which it rests, or, again, to lower to a subordinate place in His life-work that in which Jesus manifestly found the vocation of His life, the question at once is forced upon us as to the relation of His teaching to His person and His work. The investigation

of this question will give us a preliminary idea of the peculiarity of His teaching.

### § 1. TEACHING AND LIFE

That Jesus appeared among His people as a teacher is attested by friend and foe ; they all addressed Him as Rabbi, Master, Teacher, and He always accepted this address as correct. But the people felt at once a profound difference between His teaching and that of the scribes : "What new doctrine is this ?" exclaim His hearers in the synagogue. "He preaches with authority, and not as the scribes" (Mark i. 27 ; Matt. vii. 29). By the higher authority with which He spoke, by a divinely authoritative character of His teaching, the people recognised Him as a prophet equal to the greatest of their old prophets (Mark viii. 28 ; Matt. xvi. 14). His disciples, however, hoped and anticipated still more from Him : "He was a prophet mighty in word and deed before God and all the people ; but we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel" (Luke xxiv. 19). And He met that hope with His inmost consciousness ; He knew Himself to be the Messiah, the God-sent deliverer of Israel, and had no higher wish than to be recognised as such in the right sense (Mark viii. 29 ; Matt. xvi. 16). His teaching therefore, from the very first, has for its background a unique self-consciousness, the incomparable significance of His person, and from the beginning was directed towards something that must be more than teaching, that must be work and deed, viz. the founding of God's kingdom. And this founding was finally accomplished, not by His teaching as such, but by His personal devotion to and completion of His life-work, by His death and resurrection. Does His teaching thereby lose its original fundamental significance, and sink down to a mere introduction to New Testament revelation ? It must be said that little as the teaching of Jesus in itself, apart from the conclusion of His life, could have called into existence the kingdom of God, as little could that ending of His life have called it into being without the foregoing doctrinal revelation. This doctrinal revelation first induced that end to His life, and gave it meaning ; and it alone collected that

community of disciples who were able to grasp and propagate that meaning. And therefore His doctrine is not indeed His life-work itself, but the ideal reflection of it, the evidence of what He wished, what He was conscious of being and doing. His teaching therefore is *that* in His appearance and active life which is necessary to make that life intelligible to us, and without which the apostolic teaching about Him would only be a sum of dogmatic utterances which we could not comprehend, and whose truth we could not prove—a result not a little awkward for that view which contrasts the “teaching of Jesus” as Christianity proper with the apostolic “teaching about Christ.”

## § 2. SOURCES

If this be the significance of the teaching of Jesus for the full understanding of Christianity, we must inquire the more urgently about its sources. Jesus did not write anything; He simply trained His disciples in personal intercourse to be the living witnesses of His mission. Even they did not immediately record their reminiscences, but confided them to oral testimony; and when one of them, at a great age, set about leaving his treasures of memory as a legacy to the community, remembrance and exposition had become to him so inseparable, that he could only bring forth his picture of Jesus, and especially the sayings of Jesus, in an original form resulting from the fusion of his own spiritual life. But although we must, on that account, take no notice of the Johannine source in constructing a picture of Jesus that is to be authentic even in form, we are still in possession of a sufficient and well-attested tradition. The first three Gospels have preserved the reminiscences of the life of Jesus as they existed in the earliest days of Christendom, both within *yevēā aūtōn* and before the extinction of His contemporaries (Matt. xiv. 34; Mark xiii. 30; Luke xxi. 32); they also, on their part, rest on still earlier notes whose reliable origin is certain. Papias has attested the existence of a collection of sayings (of Jesus) which the Apostle Matthew, that is, one of the constant companions of Jesus, composed in Hebrew (Aramaic); and this earliest, most reliable, and richest source of knowledge of the

teaching of Jesus, may be recognised in the speeches with which the first and third evangelists break in upon the sequence of their chief source.<sup>1</sup> But even this main narrative source which they both have in common with the Gospel of Mark, and which, at any rate, appears in Mark's Gospel with least change, "the primitive Gospel" contains a treasure of doctrinal sayings of Jesus; and this primitive Gospel, according to the credible testimony of the same Papias, is—at least with respect to its greatest part and most important matter—traced back to Mark, the companion of the Apostle Peter, that is, to Peter's own didactic utterances.<sup>2</sup> Finally, whatever is peculiar to Matthew, or in far greater abundance to Luke, either springs likewise from that collection of sayings, or, according to Luke i. 1, presupposes other very old sources, and is authenticated by the fact that it resembles the most certainly authentic both in tone and in value. The wording of many sayings, or the connection in which they appear, or the interpretation they receive in that connection, do indeed deviate from each other in details, as could not but be expected in a tradition passing through so many hands. Many important words have been introduced in a different setting in Matthew and Luke, partly on account of different Greek translations of those Aramaic sayings, partly on account of the involuntary changes of oral tradition, to which we may also add the different conjectures of one or other evangelist about the original occasion of the saying. In such cases, when the use to be made of the saying in biblical theology is affected by this diversity, a critical investigation of the original terms and meaning must, of course, take place. The merely oral character of the original tradition has affected the meaning and wording much less than one would have supposed from other cases. The method of teaching of antiquity, resting always on oral communications, gave a fidelity to the apostle's memories to a degree unknown to us. The sayings of Jesus especially, by the peculiarity of their contents as well as their form, had an incomparable power of stamping themselves upon the memory. Besides, they would be so frequently and intentionally repeated in the circle of the first believers, as very soon to form a fixed common possession preserved with

<sup>1</sup> Cf. my *Leben Jesu*, i. p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 84.

sacred reverence. And therefore there is really very little against which the irresolute modern criticism raises serious question : some sayings, which from their Judaizing or Ebionitic impress seem to be marked as productions of a Jewish-Christian tradition ; some various readings and expositions of parables, and, in particular, a part of the prophetic discourses in the more restricted sense, which, on account of their inner difficulties, one would fain trace back to a later apocalyptic source, although, from all signs, they seem to spring from the same source as the Sermon on the Mount and the most incontestable parables. These doubtful sayings will, of course, have to be dealt with in detail; the abiding proof of their genuineness is the quite definite and inimitable impress which distinguishes the essentially permanent character of the synoptic sayings of Jesus, not only from all the wisdom of this world, but also from the other sayings of the New Testament.

### § 3. PECULIARITY OF JESUS' TEACHING

This very peculiarity of the teaching of Jesus is what we have to explain in form and contents, so far as that is possible by anticipation. The form in which Jesus speaks in the synoptic tradition is the gnomic or parabolic, examples of which we find already in the Old Testament, the short, terse maxim out of which the longer didactic or polemic discourses are constructed, or the concise pictorial narrative, the parable. Both forms of teaching are eminently suited to the requirements of oral instruction, such as Jesus gave to His disciples in particular, beside His preaching to the people (Mark iv. 10-32); they make the ideas to be communicated in the highest degree clear, impressive, and memorable. But the universally pictorial style of Jesus' doctrine is conditioned not merely by a necessity of teaching, but rather springs—and this leads us deeper into the peculiarity of His teaching—chiefly from the nature of the things to be communicated. These are just the eternal truths, the heavenly things in earthly speech, which can only be brought home to the popular understanding by pictorial forms. It is therefore the mother speech of religion which Jesus uses. And He

uses this speech with a purity and perfection that makes His mode of communication quite incomparable. It is distinguished not only from all speech of science, but also from that speech of religious contemplation which meets us in the writings of the apostles. It is distinguished from it, as the living source is from the fresh and clear flowing brook ; it is all directness, living perception, pure genius ; everything in it flows, not from any mediated or artificial world of ideas, but from native spiritual wealth, from the fulness of His inner life. We also find, in addition to this, that He rarely, and only out of condescension to the ignorance of His opponents or for their confusion, has recourse to argument or means of proof. As a rule, He despairs these for the reason that He does not need them for His own sake, and that the sincere hearts among His hearers do not need them ; because what He says is self-evident to the reason and conscience of the sincere man. His word is therefore in the highest sense testimony, viz. testimony to the Divine which lives and moves in Him. "Verily I say unto you" is the constant expression of an inward certainty which can count on the willing or unwilling inward assent of His hearers. He does not even in any formal way teach the religion which lives in Him. Its moral deductions are taught as in the Sermon on the Mount, or its conditions and ways of operation as in the parables. The thing itself He merely expresses, nay, still more presupposes than expresses. It is to Him as the silent, clear, starry heaven, which, as a matter of course, hangs over the earth though clouds conceal it from the eyes of men. Then consider also the peculiar contents of the new faith which He in this way proclaims. That we may not anticipate and get lost in vagueness, let us note only a few characteristic features which distinguish it from all, and raise it above all that is otherwise called religion in the world. The religion of Jesus is, above all, a religion for the world, for universal man. Although it speaks the language of Israel, and was first offered to the people of Israel, yet even in its birth it divests itself inwardly of every national limitation. It makes all men neighbours, makes no distinction between them before God, and meets with heavenly satisfaction the needs of the human heart, which are the same everywhere. It is further

a religion of the spirit, a religion of inwardness and freedom. It does not bind to sacred places or times, it knows no sacrifices or ceremonies, no forms or formulæ as in themselves pleasing to God. Nothing is of value in it but the pure heart, the love of God, and what that love calls forth in the heart of man. And yet it is capable of the most vigorous outward expression. It, too, has forms of the religious life, personal as well as social, but they have value only in so far as they call forth or fulfil the free impulse of the heart. Again, it is the perfectly moral and morally perfect religion. Everything in it has its ethical side, its moral fruits, without which it is of no value in the sight of God. And the moral demand which this divine faith makes is the highest, the strictest, the most comprehensive conceivable. Over and above every outward and particular deed of obedience, it claims the whole inward man for God and His commandments. It recognises nothing but the highest and purest motives, and follows sin into the inmost recesses of the heart, to the uprising of anger and the motion of evil desire. And this religion of inexorable moral strictness is at the same time a religion of salvation, a religion of grace in the most comprehensive sense of the word. From the same idea of God as the absolutely Good One, out of which springs the absolute demand, "Be ye perfect, even as the Father in heaven is perfect," arises, at the same time, the glad message of His unlimited fatherly mercy which goes in search of the lost son and meets him with forgiveness,—out of it there flows the idea of a kingdom of God and a communion with God, which can be given only to the poor in spirit, those who have a real feeling of need, because its desire is to make the poor rich, and satisfy with righteousness those who hunger and thirst for it. Finally, the gospel of Jesus is the religion of eternal life. It restores man to his lost eternal home, makes him at home as no other faith can in the invisible world of perfection which his soul craves, and thereby lifts him above the imperfections of his earthly existence. But it does not do so in such a way as to depreciate this earthly existence and induce men to flee from the world, or long for death. It rather consecrates this earth as a vestibule of heaven, and its sufferings as a school of eternal life. The idea of the kingdom

of heaven, the idea of a kingdom of God, sown in time and ripened in eternity, removes the antithesis of this world and the next—of life and death.

#### § 4. ORIGIN OF JESUS' TEACHING

If this is the peculiarity of the religious teaching of Jesus, there can hardly be any reasonable doubt about its origin. It bears throughout the impress of the highest originality, of originating immediately in His own inner life; but it does so, not in the sense of being the outcome of His subjective fancy,—in that case it would be the most insoluble of psychological and historical riddles,—but as an immediate gift to His soul from above, a revelation of God in Him and through Him. That at least is the consciousness which He Himself had of His doctrine. “All things are delivered unto Me of My Father.” “My doctrine is not Mine, but that of Him who sent Me” (Matt. xi. 27; John vii. 16). In point of fact it is impossible, often as the attempt has been made, to deduce the consciousness of Jesus and the contents of His teaching from any spiritual power which existed in His day. Even though a contact of Jesus with the Hellenic world had not already been excluded by outer facts of His life—how could He have kindled His inner light and life at this hearth? The religion of classical antiquity, even in its noblest manifestations, and its then foremost living mysteries, was the worship of deified nature, and therefore the direct opposite of the religion of Jesus. And the philosophy of antiquity, even where its highest presentiments of truth approach to the gospel, was just philosophy and not revelation,—a wavering, doubting question addressed to heaven, not a certified answer from heaven such as Jesus gives. But even the Jewish religion in which He was born and trained is no key to His own. That religion is dominated by pretty much the opposite of all those characteristics of the religion of Jesus on which we have been insisting. The Jewish religion in the days of Jesus, with all its proselytising and dreams of a world dominion, was just as narrow-hearted and national as could be, and notwithstanding a certain spiritualising of its worship in the synagogue, it clung more tenaciously than

ever to outer forms and postures. It could not indeed deny its inborn ethical character, but it externalised and made it as superficial as possible. And instead of referring its likewise inborn belief in salvation to the redemption of the inner man, it referred it to redemption from outer natural and political restraints. It certainly developed belief in another world, departing thus from its earlier tradition, but in such a way as to fill that other world with earthly sensuous dreams, instead of making this world spiritual by having aims above earth. In a word, the living religion of the Jewish people of that day is just that which we find expressed more consciously and formally in Pharisaism. And in view of our Gospel records, there is no need for wasting words in seeking to prove the depth of the contrast that existed between Jesus and Pharisaism, a contrast that excludes any original affinity or sympathy. Nor is there any affinity of spirit between Jesus and the other well-known types of current Judaism. Sadduceism, that worn-out aristocratic priestly conservatism which was entirely opposed to the religious development of Judaism, and possessed no positive religious principle at all, could only, with its denial of eternal life, have been an offence to Jesus. Neither has Jesus made any allusion even in word to Essenism with which so many would like to connect Him. Deeper religious needs, it is true, lay at the basis of Essenism, but they were satisfied in a way that was completely foreign and offensive to Jesus, the way of monasticism and mysticism springing out of a view at bottom dualistic and ascetic, of which we can find no trace in the teaching of Jesus. There is just as little trace of Alexandrianism in Him,—that artificial theology of mediation between the Old Testament religion and Greek philosophy, which is related to the teaching of Jesus as cistern water to the living fountain. Now there was, of course, among the Jews of that day, besides these degenerate tendencies, a more genuine succession of the psalmists and prophets, those "poor in spirit" and "quiet in the land," to the circle of whom Jesus and His family undoubtedly belonged. But the purer and deeper that genuine issue of Old Testament religion was, the more must there have been impressed on it a feature which was completely foreign to Jesus personally, which was indeed the very

opposite of His peculiar consciousness, that fundamental feature of the consciousness of guilt, the deeply felt discord between the holy God and sinful Israel of which we have a directly typical example in John the Baptist. This feeling of estrangement from God, of sin and guilt separating God and man from each other, might indeed be felt by Jesus in compassionate sympathy, and perhaps His submitting to the baptism of John may be explained by this sympathy. But it is so completely foreign to Him personally that the ground-tone of His whole self-consciousness is rather the undisturbed sense of communion with God, the blessed consciousness of divine Sonship.

#### § 5. REVEALED CHARACTER OF CHRIST'S TEACHING

This brings us to the real mystery of the personality of Jesus which forms the salient point of His whole teaching, and which explains and confirms on all sides its peculiarities as described above. He did not preach a union of God with all men which is either inherent in all or reached by way of self-development, but He is immediately and originally certain of that communion only for Himself. But out of it, out of the consciousness of being in a unique sense the Son of God, grew His consciousness of being the Saviour, and His sense of a vocation to help His brethren to a similar communion with God, or—what is the same thing—to receive them into the kingdom of heaven that appears in Him; and from this point His "evangel," His teaching and preaching, unfolds itself on all sides. We are only incidentally reminded here, where the object is merely a sketch, not a justification of the teaching of Jesus, how impossible it is to resolve all that enduring ground-consciousness of His into a fanatical dream, how firmly it must be founded on the truth, on a fact which not merely lets Him have a revelation, but makes Himself a personal revelation of God. For this self-consciousness of Jesus did not grow on the soil of a Hellenic self-deceptive intermixture of the divine and human, but on the basis of the law and prophets, on the basis of the ethico-metaphysical distinction between God and man, on which it is not conceivable except as the reflection of an inner life which absolutely does not know that which separates

the holy God and the heart of man, viz. sin.<sup>1</sup> The character of His teaching, however, directly furnishes a twofold proof of the truth of that self-consciousness. The first is more of a formal nature. The teaching of Jesus as a teaching of religion resting on revelation may be most readily compared with the teaching of the prophets; though there obtains here an important difference. The divine inspiration comes upon the prophet by fits and starts, as a power half-foreign, which falls, as it were, upon him in specially elevated moments of his life. But in the case of Jesus everything is equable. He knows no difference between hours of inspiration and ordinary hours. The spring of divine revelation wells up in Him quietly and constantly, not while He is exalted above Himself, but while simply Himself and giving Himself. It is the eternal foundation of His personal life from which His words of eternal life at all times flow. The second proof to which we refer, leads us into the contents and central point of His teaching. He is not merely, like Moses, the prophet of His religion; He Himself is its living content and basis, as His person supports, guarantees, indeed first makes possible His entire teaching. If communion with God, "the kingdom of God," had not been personally realised in Him, His whole proclamation of it would have been destitute both of truth and meaning; nay, as a child of His people and its religion He could not have even grasped the idea of a kingdom of God, the dwelling of the holy God with the sinful sons of men, had it not originally been realised in His absolutely pure communion of heart with God. But then we comprehend how all the great characteristics of His teaching, emphasised above, are nothing else than the natural manifestations of His personal consciousness, the simple issues of the fact of His unique and ideally perfect relation to God. Because He has the pure heart of the perfect child of God, He is able to see the Father in heaven as no prophet before Him and no apostle after Him, and all the mists of national limitation and legal externality fall away from the eyes of His spirit. Because the eternal Good, the *εἰς ἀράθος* (Mark x. 18), with His holy love, lives and moves in Him, He can, on the one hand, clearly unfold the holy demands of that love to the judging even of heart

<sup>1</sup> Cf. my *Leben Jesu*, i. p. 182.

and thoughts, and at the same time guarantee and realise the whole saving, forgiving, sanctifying love of the Father. Finally, because He brings the life of a higher world into this and victoriously tests it in the conflict with the earthly, the partition-wall between this world and that to come is for Him inwardly abolished, and the whole earthly life placed in the transfiguring light of eternity. But when we deduce all the characteristics of His teaching from His personal unlimited communion with God, and can deduce them only from that, we have traced them back to that very thing which makes Him the personal bearer of the perfect revelation of God among men, and therewith have furnished the positive proof of the revealed origin and character of His teaching.

#### § 6. RELATION OF THE TEACHING OF JESUS TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

Nevertheless, the teaching of Jesus has one side from which its complete originality may plausibly be called in question, and that is its connection with the Old Testament. Notwithstanding all that we have said about His elevation above the religious parties of contemporary Judaism, are not the sacred documents of His people, are not the "law and the prophets" to Him divine authorities? And does not that deprive His gospel of part at least of its character as personal revelation, and make it simply a prophetic development and completion of the Old Testament religion of Jehovah?

Certainly the law and the prophets speak to Him the word of God. He not only appeals to them as Holy Scripture against the people and the scribes, but to Himself they are a lamp to His feet and a light to His path. When the story of the temptation shows Him beating back the assaults of Satan with a text of Scripture, and the narrative of the transfiguration makes Moses and Elias proclaim the decease which He is to accomplish at Jerusalem (Luke ix. 31), there lies at the basis of these statements the fact, that in the most painful crises of His life He grasped and held by the words of Scripture, by the law and the prophets. And His belief in them appears so absolute as to make Him declare that "heaven and earth will pass away sooner than one jot or tittle

of the law should fail" (Matt. v. 18 ; Luke xvi. 17). Accordingly, His teaching seems everywhere rooted in the Old Testament; all its ideas and elements spring out of the Old Testament, and if there are many things of importance in it which He does not directly teach, that may be explained by the fact that, in the case of His disciples, He can presuppose them as elements of the Old Testament with which they were familiar. Yet we do not find Him in a relation of constrained slavish dependence on the Old Testament Scriptures. The words about the writing of divorce which was permitted, the commandment that no work should be done on the Sabbath, were in the law, and He did not pay any heed to them; He calmly set against the first the creative thought of God, and against the latter the royal rights of the Son of Man. Nay, if we consider the matter more closely, we shall be astonished at the wide tracts of Old Testament Scripture which have, as it were, no existence for Him, though He manifestly knew them. He has scarcely touched the whole wide region of the sacrificial and ceremonial law, He has at most taken notice of the whole politico-theocratic form of the Messianic idea in order to reject it once for all, and every moral imperfection in the Old Testament, especially the theocratic spirit of revenge, with its words and deeds—even when represented by an Elias—does not for a moment mislead Him as to the law of love and meekness which becomes His kingdom. We see that He read the Old Testament with an independent mind, with a sure test in His heart which made Him distinguish the divine kernel from the human husk, the eternal idea from the imperfect and temporary expression of it, even in the most difficult cases; and this test can only have been the higher and purer religious ideas which He bore in Himself. It is evident therefore that His relation to the Old Testament by no means contradicts or even limits what we have already said about the originality of His doctrinal ideas, as coming from the depth of His own inner life which He lived in God. What then is His relation to the law and the prophets which allows Him to believe in them without binding Him to them? The best answer is Matt. v. 17 : "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." The revelation of God did not first begin with Him; it com-

plete itself in Him, and the law and prophets are just steps towards this completion. It is self-evident, therefore, that the preliminary revelation is not destroyed or abolished, but recognised by Him who comes to complete it. But it is equally self-evident that to Him this preparatory revelation is not the perfect one, and that He has to raise its detected imperfections into the perfect, and that is just the fulfilment to which the above saying refers. Not an actual fulfilment, such as might very well have been asserted of Messiah, but, as the further course of the Sermon on the Mount puts beyond all question, a didactic fulfilment, that is, a perfection and completion in virtue of which the inmost meaning of the law and the prophets is to be set forth and made authoritative, as it had not been in its Old Testament form. Jesus Himself never failed to apprehend that this Old Testament form must herewith as such be exploded, just as the covering of the bud must be burst when the blossom opens out. No jot or tittle of the law was to fail, only in the sense of not being thrown away as an empty husk; there is in every one a divine kernel and germ, which must obtain its due, its unfolding. But when that is secure, what had been husk inevitably falls away, as is clear from the expositions of the law which follow in Matt. v. 17–20; in each of them an imperfect divine idea is fulfilled in spirit whilst it is destroyed in the letter. And as with the precepts of the law, so is it with all Old Testament ideas and views which Jesus turns to account; they are confirmed and transformed in one breath. They are recognised as divine, as surely as they are rooted in the Old Testament, but in such a way that their divine character and vitality for the first time attain their full development; in the mouth of Jesus they seem at once old and new, they are no longer Old Testament, but New Testament ideas.

The watchword about fulfilling the law and the prophets goes beyond the immediate meaning of Matt. v. 17; it expresses the entire relation of Jesus to the Old Testament. He fulfils the law and the prophets, by bringing about what they aim at, the kingdom of heaven or kingdom of God. This fundamental conception of Jesus, from which His whole teaching unfolds itself—at least in the first three Gospels—is what we have above all to direct our attention to.

## CHAPTER II

## THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN OR KINGDOM OF GOD

JESUS appeared with the announcement, the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matt. iv. 17), and His whole preaching from beginning to end may be comprised in His gospel of the kingdom of God (Mark i. 1; Acts i. 3). The Sermon on the Mount begins with the promise of the kingdom of heaven to the poor in spirit; the parables revolve around the idea of the kingdom of God; the prophecies refer to its appearance. The other writings of the New Testament are also acquainted with this fundamental conception (cf. e.g. John iii. 3, 5; Acts viii. 1, 2; Jas. ii. 5; Rom. xiv. 17; 1 Cor. iv. 20, xv. 50), and if it does not properly belong to their diction, and therefore appears only now and then, that only makes it the more evidently a reminiscence of Jesus' own mode of teaching. What then does Jesus mean by this His favourite watchword?

## § 1. MEANING OF THE WORD

As to the meaning of the word, *βασιλεία* may indicate the abstract kinghood, the royal power and dignity (= Heb. *מֶלֶךְ*), as well as the concrete realm, the sphere of dominion (*מֶלֶךְ*). Luther has translated both senses by kingdom, and they so pass into each other, in idea and usage, that in many passages of the Gospels we cannot be certain which is meant. The abstract conception is, however, by far the rarer — it is certainly contained in Luke xxii. 29, xxiii. 42: *καὶ γὰρ διατίθεμαι ὑμῖν καθὼς διέθετό μοι ὁ πατήρ μου, βασιλεῖαν*; and *ὅταν ἔλθῃς εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν σου.* On the other hand, the concrete is the usual conception; it alone suits such expressions as "the least in the kingdom of heaven"; "to enter into the kingdom of God"; "to inherit the kingdom that is prepared" (cf. Matt. v. 4). This concrete notion of the kingdom is therefore in doubtful cases to be preferred and made the basis of our present investigation. As to the double expression *βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν* and *τοῦ θεοῦ*, the first belongs only to the Gospel of Matthew, in which it is the

prevailing expression. The rest of the New Testament—apart from the uncertain reading in John iii. 3, 5—has only the *βασιλεῖα τοῦ θεοῦ*. That both expressions mean the same thing is manifest from the parallels of Matthew on the one hand, and of Mark and Luke on the other; as well as from the absolute expression *ἡ βασιλεῖα*, which is frequently used in Matthew. Both are found alongside each other even in Rabbinic writings. The idea that the expression kingdom of heaven is a twist given to the conception by the first evangelist after the destruction of Jerusalem, with the view of transferring to heaven the appearance of the kingdom that was no longer hoped for on earth, is certainly erroneous. For the first Gospel is the earliest, and was composed before the destruction of Jerusalem; and though in it the appearance of the kingdom is expected from heaven, it is by no means transferred to heaven (iv. 17, xxiv. 30, xxvi. 64). The probability rather is that the expression comes from the oldest source, the Logia of Matthew, and was the one that Jesus Himself preferred to use. Its enigmatic and peculiar Old Testament impress may—as in the case of the expression Son of Man—have hindered its transference to Gentile-Christian usage, and therefore to the second and third Gospels. As to its strict import, we must reject the view which—in accordance with the aversion of the Jews to pronounce the name of God—makes heaven here a mere paraphrase for God. That is never the way of Jesus, who rather disapproves of that speaking of heaven instead of God (Matt. v. 34); even then we would at least expect the singular instead of the plural *οὐρανῶν*, which is constantly used.<sup>1</sup> The expression rather appears to have come from the passages Dan. ii. 44, vii. 13, 14, and to have pointed to heaven as the original home of the kingdom of God, the genitive thus expressing the origin, and therefore the attributes which it possesses. This view best answers to the meaning which heaven has in the teaching of Jesus as the kingdom of ideal perfection. When we find in the Lord's Prayer that the petition, "Thy will be done in earth," follows immediately that of "Thy kingdom come,"

<sup>1</sup> The singular is used in Luke xv. 18, 21; this is the only occasion in the New Testament where the common usage of heaven as equivalent for God is put in the mouth of the prodigal son.

we may take the former as the best exposition of the latter. The kingdom of God is where the will of God is done on earth as it is in heaven, that is, where it is done ideally. According to this, the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God would be the perfect original order of things which has its home in heaven, in order to come down from thence and realise itself on earth,—that ideal condition which humanity and history are to reach, that God may in His inmost essence, as eternal Spirit and holy love, fill all and condition all that is in the world.

### § 2. ITS HISTORICAL ROOT

But a well-based understanding of the phrase can only be gained by an examination of history. The watchword chosen by Jesus strikes us to-day perhaps as strange, but was at once understood by His countrymen and contemporaries. The kingdom of heaven, or kingdom of God, was manifestly at that time a current expression in Israel, and one that could be used without need of further explanation. That is already presupposed in the terse preaching of the Baptist about the kingdom of heaven as at hand. It is said of Joseph of Arimathea that he waited for the kingdom of God (Mark xv. 43). The Pharisees asked Jesus (Luke xvii. 20) when the kingdom of God should come. A scribe who sat at meat with Jesus piously exclaims (Luke xiv. 15): "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." In all these passages the kingdom of God is unmistakably the tersest expression for the object of Israel's highest expectation, for that very thing which the people in the loud rejoicings at our Lord's entrance into Jerusalem called the coming kingdom of our father David (Mark xi. 10), that which was in the mind of the disciples when they asked (Acts i. 6): "Wilt Thou not at this time restore the kingdom unto Israel?"—in a word, the Messianic kingdom. This Messianic sense is not, indeed, usual in the language of the later Rabbis. They preferred to speak in the abstract religious sense of the Malechut Jahve, and Malechut Schamajim, rather than of the kingship of Jehovah, the heavenly Majesty before which men must bow. But these post-Christian and rabbinical applications

are best explained as intentional perversions of the original Messianic sense, adaptations by the later Pharisaism which had become unfriendly to the Messianic idea, though they are confronted by other passages in the pre-Christian as well as post-Christian Jewish literature, in which the Messianic sense of both expressions is unquestionable.<sup>1</sup> The whole inner history of Israel could not fail to secure to this phrase a Messianic character. For government by God—theocracy, as Josephus expressed the idea in Greek—was the ideal constitution of the nation from the earliest times. It was the fundamental idea of Mosaism that Israel should be God's peculiar people above all nations, a kingdom of priests in which Jehovah should rule (Ex. xix. 5, 6). But this lofty idea was only outwardly and imperfectly realised in the land of promise, and even its shadowy realisation was broken up with the fall of the old Israelitish State. It lived, however, all the more vividly in the view of the prophets as the ideal picture of the future; for the true God must at length obtain the victory on earth, and celebrate His triumph in the setting up of a commonwealth on which He would pour out all blessings, and from which He would remove all defects,—a commonwealth in which would be fully realised the promise, "Ye shall be my people, and I will be your God." This ideal picture of a glorious and blessed kingdom of God in Israel, and extending from Israel over all the world, was really the fundamental idea of the Messianic hope. The so-called Messianic idea in the narrower sense, the hope (picture) of a personal Messiah, was quite subordinate to this fundamental idea—a fact which cannot be too much attended to. That might waver and fade, the ideal form of the servant of God, or the mere Theophany, might take its place and produce a confusion of contradictory Messianic notions in the nation, but the kingdom of God remained the unchangeable expectation of all pious men. And as the hope of realising it on earth sank lower,—as Israel, instead of being politically exalted, was more and more scattered and brought under the oppression of successive worldly powers,—

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Cremer, *Bibl.-theol. Lexicon of N. T. Greek*, p. 189, Aufl. 5. In the very old Jewish prayer, Kaddish, e.g., it is said: "May He shortly cause His kingdom to come"

the more were their eyes raised to heaven in the hope of seeing what they longed for coming down from thence sustained by heavenly strength, an imperishable kingdom of heaven opposed to the kingdoms of the heathen which spring from beneath. That is the standpoint of the Book of Daniel, which arose out of the hardships of the Maccabean age, and in which it is said (ii. 44): "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and His kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and destroy all those kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." The special conception of the kingdom of heaven, alongside of the general conception of the kingdom of God, was unquestionably developed out of these visions. But even the latter, which, to judge from the usage of the rest of the New Testament, appears to have been the more current, was understood by every one in the same sense. When, therefore, the Baptist first, and after him One greater than he, appeared with the watchword, "The kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God, is at hand," no one could be in doubt about the meaning of this watchword. It announced in the clearest, tersest, most comprehensive way the final fulfilment of what for ages had been longed and hoped for.

### § 3. JESUS' IDEA OF THE KINGDOM

Still, it is anything but superfluous to ask about Jesus' own idea of the kingdom. Though the way in which He takes that phrase from the lips of His people—at first without further explanation—leaves no doubt that He was conscious of meaning the same thing as His hearers, yet the more definite notions about the kingdom of God differed widely in the nation itself, according as people's thoughts were deep or superficial, spiritual or worldly, and even to the most earnest and spiritual it was only a picture of fancy, which, as all prophecy, and still more all interpretation of prophecy, is imperfect, was far from corresponding to the fulfilment desired by God. But the question with Jesus was this divine fulfilment, first the pure and perfect truth of the idea, and then the way in which it might be realised. And

so we cannot wonder that although at the beginning He did not find any need for a closer exposition, He should afterwards enter largely into discussions with His disciples about the kingdom of heaven, and speak to them about its mysteries (Mark iv. 11; Matt. xiii. 11). The supposition is not excluded that the idea of the kingdom developed in His hands. He could scarcely begin otherwise than with that notion of it which was furnished by the Old Testament prophets, and which was cherished even by John the Baptist. But when His idea of the kingdom, which at first seemed to be simply the ordinary idea, became more and more unintelligible to the people, and even to the disciples, the most devout of the people, we must suppose that in the work of fulfilling there were revealed to Him aspects and depths of the idea formerly unsuspected.<sup>1</sup> But we would go far astray if we supposed that the development which the idea of the kingdom took in the mind and spirit of Jesus was a development into something abstract, in some such way as we nowadays, divesting the concept of its specific Messianic character, speak of a kingdom of God already in the old covenant. There are two passages in His discourses which may certainly give this an appearance of probability. When we read (Matt. viii. 12, xxi. 43) that the children of the kingdom are to be cast out while strangers are received, or that the kingdom is to be taken from them and given to others, it appears as though the Israelites as such were thought of as in possession of the kingdom—that is, of a kingdom already existing under the old covenant. But both passages permit another interpretation: the Israelites are “children of the kingdom,” and their magistrates are pillars of the kingdom in virtue of their hereditary claim upon it; but the kingdom is not theirs in possession, it is intended and promised to them, and may be lost. We are therefore compelled to expound both passages in the Messianic sense which unmistakably prevails in all the other sayings of Jesus about the kingdom. When, in the Lord’s Prayer, He teaches us to pray for the coming of the kingdom, when He makes it replace the law and the prophets on earth (Matt. xi. 11–13; Luke xvi. 16), when He regards it as having come near and become accessible only in His

<sup>1</sup> Cf. my *Leben Jesu*, i. p. 231.

own day and since the days of John the Baptist, He cannot possibly have extended the concept to the Old Testament preparatory stage, but must have used it to describe the Messianic fulfilment. But even that is a very awkward view of the matter, making it appear as if Jesus had transformed the Messianic meaning from the sensuous and secular conception which had come down to His contemporaries from the time of the prophets, into something purely spiritual. There certainly existed between what His contemporaries, in virtue of the prophetic delineations of the kingdom of God, above all expected, and what Jesus offered them as a commencement and foundation of its fulfilment, a contrast of such force that Jesus on account of it was not recognised as the promised Deliverer, but was rejected as a false Messiah. The prophets, "seeing in a glass darkly, and not face to face" (1 Cor. xiii. 12), had portrayed the kingdom of God, above all, as a kingdom of power which would outshine and overpower the kingdoms of the heathen, and this side of the prophecy, as is well known, was most powerfully re-echoed among the Jewish people in the days of Jesus. The hopes of the nation were directed to nothing more passionately than the breaking up of the Roman Empire and the establishment of a Jewish supremacy. Jesus refused on principle to have any hand in realising this side of the Messianic hope,—for that is the meaning and content of the narrative of the temptation,—and this refusal set up between Him and the mass of the people, from the very first, that barrier which proved itself more and more impenetrable as time went on. This does not mean, however, that He could have regarded those national expectations as a mere perishable husk of prophecy, without at the same time conceiving their fulfilment as a blessing to come from heaven with the conversion of Israel. Still less does it follow from this that He had conceived the entire sensuous form in which the idea of the kingdom appeared in the prophets as mere symbol and parable, and had looked for its fulfilment in the setting up of a purely spiritual kingdom of God on earth—with the prospect, perhaps, of a heavenly perfection of it in another world. The nature of the kingdom of God is not conceived by the prophets as altogether sensuous and worldly, but spiritual;

its principal gifts are a purifying of the nation, an outpouring of the Spirit of God on all flesh, and a writing of the divine law on the heart. When, however, they are not content with these inward results, but carry the dominion of God into worldly affairs, and make the peace of God penetrate even nature (cf. e.g. Isa. xi.), it is no doubt sacred poetry, not, however, a mere poetic clothing of those spiritual promises, but an independent and essential element of their view of the world. The form and colour in which they clothe them are, of course, taken from their earthly horizon, and are altogether of an individual, poetic, and symbolic nature, so that even the succeeding prophet, not to speak of the Fulfiller, does not feel himself bound by them. But under these forms and colours is hidden an unchanging heart of meaning, the idea of an actual world-transfiguring development of the expected kingdom of God. And this idea is anything but an imperfection and limitation of the prophetic view; it marks, on the contrary, the healthy energy of the religious faith of the Bible, not in a half, but in a complete victory of God in the world,—a faith which is not content fainheartedly to claim the inner and secret life of man for God, whilst it allows the great life of history and nature, as the kingdom of sin and evil, to remain for ever divided between God and Satan. Jesus, as the Fulfiller of prophecy, could not possibly fall behind the prophets in this matter. And He manifestly has not fallen behind them. Certainly when the nation fell away from the prophetic spirit, made the visible wonders of the kingdom of God its first and most essential things, and added its spiritual character as matter of course, it was the work of Jesus to rectify the relation of the two sides thus displaced, and to lay the whole weight on the spiritual and conditional nature of the kingdom of God. The promise, therefore, of the kingdom which He makes to precede every other is a glad message for the poor in spirit, mercy for the merciful, satisfaction for those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, a vision of God for the pure in heart (Matt. v. 3 ff.). But when, alongside of these, He promises that the meek shall inherit the earth, that is, obtain final dominion of the world, when He sees in His miracles of healing and expulsion of demons—victories over natural evil—the signs

of the kingdom of God having come (Matt. xi. 2–6, xii. 28), or when, in His prophecies, He announces a final judgment as taking place on earth, and a new birth of the universe (Matt. xix. 28, and 24, 25), it is clear beyond all doubt that He regards the transformation of the historical conditions, as well as the glorifying of the life of nature, the restoration of all that exists to a pure and perfect expression of the eternally good, as belonging essentially to the consummation of the idea of the kingdom. Therefore when He appears among His people with the announcement, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. iv. 17), He means by this kingdom of heaven not merely the immediate fruits of repentance in the heart, but that very kingdom of which He says in His words about the judgment of the world, that the pious are to inherit it at the last day, that it is prepared for them from the foundation of the world (Matt. xxv. 34). He means the approaching realisation of that eternal ideal of the world, when it is to be filled and blessed by the all-ruling eternal Love.

#### § 4. THE PRESENT AND FUTURE KINGDOM

From what has now been said it is evident that there are two divergent aspects of Jesus' idea of the kingdom—its foundation, which is spiritual, and its embodied completion, which affects all the world; and a consideration of the relation of these two sides to one another will first lead us into what is really new in His idea, into the actual unfolding of His doctrine of the kingdom of heaven. For Jesus does not suppose that this ideal condition shall or can fall from heaven as by magic ready-made at a stroke. When He says the kingdom of heaven is at hand, He does not mean that it has already come; and when He goes further, and describes the kingdom as present, He does not, on that account, cease to place it in the future. That is an apparent contradiction which we have first to establish and then to solve. When Jesus (Matt. v. 3 and 10) promises the kingdom to the poor in spirit, and those suffering for righteousness, with an *ὅτι αὐτῶν ἔστιν η βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν*, He does not, of course, mean a real presence of the kingdom, but that it belongs to them in idea, is prepared for them by God. That is confirmed

by the context. All the other manifestly synonymous promises of the beatitudes refer to the future. On the other hand, the words Matt. xii. 28 manifestly speak of an actual present: *εἰ δὲ ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ ἔγω ἐκβάλλω τὰ δαιμόνια ἅρα ἔφθασεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ*, likewise Matt. xi. 12 (cf. Luke xvi. 16): *ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν ἡμερῶν Ἰωάννου τοῦ Βαπτιστοῦ ἔως ἅρτι ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν βιάζεται* (that is, allows itself to be conquered, taken by violence) *καὶ βιασταὶ ἀρπάζουσιν αὐτήν*. Or Luke xvii. 20, where Jesus to the question of the Pharisee: *πότε ἔρχεται ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ*; answers: *οὐκ ἔρχεται ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ μετὰ παρατηρήσεως . . . οὐδὲ γάρ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἐντὸς ὑμῶν ἔστιν*, that is (for He cannot have meant to say to the Pharisees that they bore it in themselves), it is in your midst. It is the same with most of the parables of the kingdom, the Parable of the Seed growing secretly (Mark iv. 26), of the Grain of Mustard Seed, of the Leaven, of the Treasure in the Field, of the Pearl of great Price (Matt. xiii.), of the Great Supper (Luke xiv. 16). At the basis of them all lies the idea that the kingdom of God is already buried in the bosom of the earth, that its table is already spread—that it is a blessing to be had now present. And that is finally confirmed by the fact that entrance into the kingdom of God is spoken of as something both possible and actual, nay, some are spoken of as already in it. *Ζητεῖτε πρῶτον τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ*, that is, *τοῦ θεοῦ* (Matt. vi. 33) —*εἰσέλθετε σιὰ τῆς στενής πύλης* (Matt. vii. 13; cf. Luke xiii. 24)—*οἱ τελῶναι καὶ αἱ πόρναι προάγοντες ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ* (Matt. xxii. 31)—*κλείετε τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὑμεῖς γάρ οὐκ εἰσέρχεσθε οὐδὲ τοὺς εἰσερχομένους* (present) *ἀφίετε εἰσελθεῖν* (Matt. xxiii. 13). Finally, *ὁ δὲ μικρότερος ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν μείζων αὐτοῦ ἔστιν*, that is, the least of those who—as disciples of Mine—are already citizens of the kingdom of heaven, is greater than John the Baptist, the historical herald of that kingdom (Matt. xi. 11). But entrance is just as often, and as expressly, conceived as something future, something that will take place on “that day.” *Ἐὰν μὴ περισσεύσῃ ὑμῶν ἡ δικαιοσύνη . . . οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν*, exclaims Jesus to those who have already become His disciples. In Matt. vii. 21 He says:

*οὐ πᾶς ὁ λέγων μοι, Κύριε, εἰσελεύσεται εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν* (cf. ver. 22 : *πολλοὶ ἐροῦσίν μοι ἐν ἑκάνη τῇ ἡμέρᾳ κ.τ.λ.*). *Τότε ἔρει ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῖς ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ : κληρονομήσατε τὴν ἡγοւμασμένην ὑμῖν βασιλείαν ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου,* is said of the last day (Matt. xxv. 34). Thus also in Matt. xxvi. 29 the departing Master refers His disciples by way of consolation to that day when He shall drink the cup of communion with them new in His Father's kingdom, as He pictures the signs of His coming again to judge the world (Luke xxi. 31), and adds : *ὅταν ἴδητε ταῦτα γενόμενα, γυνώσκετε ὅτι ἐγγύς ἔστιν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ.* Finally, when in the Lord's Prayer He teaches them to pray, *ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σοῦ*, it is manifest that it has yet to come, and is therefore still in the future. It has been supposed, that in order to solve this apparent contradiction in the announcements of Jesus about the kingdom, we must distinguish different stages in His doctrinal development, viz. that Jesus started with the idea that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, then, under the impression of the growing success, advanced to the assertion of its being present, and, finally, in view of His earthly failure comes back again to the idea of the future. But though we do not in any way deny a gradual development of His idea of the kingdom, yet the riddle is not solved in this way, because it is clear that the kingdom had never appeared in the sense in which from the beginning it had been expected and finally predicted as future. Both views of the kingdom, so far as we can see, run side by side through the teaching of Jesus, nay, they are embraced in one and the same expression (Mark x. 15 ; Luke xviii. 17) : *ὅς ἀν μὴ δέξηται τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ ὡς παιδίον οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθῃ εἰς αὐτήν :* that is a very instructive saying. It shows how both views of the kingdom, as present and as future, coexist in the mind of Jesus, and are mutually dependent on each other. The kingdom is so far present that a man may receive it ; it is still future in so far as we are yet to be received into it, and the former is the condition of the latter. The double idea of the kingdom as present and future, and the mutual relation of the two, give promise of some insight into what Jesus Himself calls the mysteries of the kingdom (Mark iv. 11).

### § 5. INNER RELATION OF THE TWO ASPECTS

Further particulars are given in the parables in which Jesus, according to His own expression, endeavoured to reveal to the disciples the *μυστήριον τῆς βασιλείας*: especially the Parables of the Sower, of the Seed growing secretly, of the Tares, the Mustard Seed, of the Leaven, and the Net. In all these the future form of the kingdom, its final glorious appearance, is conditioned by its present secret establishment. The Parable of the Sower (which, in spite of its lacking the introductory words, "the kingdom of heaven is like," belongs, according to Mark iv. 11, to the parables of the kingdom) teaches how the founding of the kingdom must take place through the sowing of the word in the individual heart. The Parables of the Seed growing secretly, and the Tares, likewise place the historical realisation of the kingdom in the world under the point of view of seedtime and harvest. In the Parable of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven, the kingdom of heaven appears as an invisible but living force, which must unfold itself in a suitable element ere it can accomplish its results. And in the Parable of the Net, the present task of extending the kingdom, its missionary duty, is set forth as a necessary pre-condition of its future task of judgment, the time of selection and rejection. Jesus had good reasons for describing these representations to His disciples as an explanation of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, for the prophets, even the last of them, the Baptist, could not have told them the like about the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God, according to the prophets, was to come all at once. They had the complete picture of it before them in one great view, and accordingly they thought of its coming—as it is said in Luke xvii.—*μετὰ παραπορήσεως*, so that one on the watch might see it coming down from heaven by a great miracle of God. This was so even with the Baptist, in whose prophetic picture of the kingdom, initial form and perfect form, baptism of the spirit and judgment of the world, immediately coincide. He imagines the Messiah coming after him with His fan in His hand, cleansing His threshing-floor, and separating the chaff from the wheat; baptizing the pious with the Holy Spirit with the one hand, and baptizing the godless with

eternal fire with the other (Matt. iii. 11, 12). The recognition comes to the mind of Jesus first of a progressiveness, a development of the kingdom of God, in virtue of which it cannot fall ready-made from heaven, but must develop itself in the bosom of the earth, in the human race and in the history of the world. That perception carried with it the distinction of a present and a future kingdom. All growth is at one and the same time present and future; it is and yet is not; it is present in germ and yet is future in its complete form. So is it with the kingdom of God. It is a thing in process of becoming—not in the sense of a gradual self-perfecting. The kingdom of God is from the beginning perfect in itself, prepared from the foundation of the world (Matt. xxv. 34), but prepared in heaven, in the ideal world of God. It has now, however, come near to earth, the world of history; it comes down from heaven to earth and already touches it, not, however, to invade it and do it violence, but in order to root itself in it and grow up in natural order to harvest. For that very reason it must begin in that inconspicuous lowly form which was so unintelligible and offensive to the people, and even to the disciples with their dreams of glory. That is the only possible beginning for a truly ethical and historical process of appropriation. That glorious form which His contemporaries expected to come ready-made from heaven can only be the final product of a true course of history, the result of infinite divine as well as human labour. Jesus endeavoured in many pictures, none of which are more profound and yet more simple than that of the seed and its sowing to which He repeatedly recurs, to make clear this view, which through Him has become familiar to us, but which was essentially strange to His first disciples. The seed is a living power in the most wonderful and, at the same time, most simple form. It is a power of growth. It bears in itself a complete image of God's glory, but in germ, secret, unimposing; it attains its development only gradually and by stages, and on condition of finding a soil fitted for it. The kingdom of heaven, though it has come near, is in the same way bound to the law of development, and conditioned by the free susceptibility of human nature. But as surely as sowing and growth finally result in harvest and completeness, so surely

will the kingdom, founded by Jesus in weakness and secrecy, finally develop into the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, into that perfect state where God will be all in all (cf. Mark iv. 26–29 ; 1 Cor. xv. 28).

### § 6. THE KINGDOM AS A POWER OF SALVATION

From this point we may now get a complete survey and estimate of Jesus' idea of the kingdom. In the first place, we are now able to settle what is true and what is false in the assertion of recent times, that in the teaching of Jesus, kingdom of God is to be conceived essentially as salvation and not as a commonweal.<sup>1</sup> No doubt we do sometimes meet with the idea of the kingdom in a phrase which seems to exclude every idea of a kingdom, that is, of a commonwealth, and to leave simply the idea of the gift of God, the gift of grace. That occurs in the passage already referred to Mark x. 15, which speaks of a receiving of the kingdom, or when the kingdom is compared to a treasure hid in the field, a pearl of great price which a man has to discover and purchase (Matt. xiii. 44–46). Yet the kingdom of heaven or "kingdom of God" can never lose its fundamental idea, the idea of a community in which God governs; nor does it lose it even in that saying of Mark, as is shown by the addition, "he shall not enter therein," and by the constant application of the notion of entrance to the present kingdom. Only, we must not overlook, that of the two elements of the kingdom of God necessarily united in idea, communion with God, and communion in God with one another, the first is throughout the more prominent in the teaching of Jesus and in its nature fundamental, the second is inferior, and rests upon the first. When Jesus declares the kingdom of God thus conceived to have come near, first of all as a power and a possibility, as a heavenly seed for the human soil, His idea is very nearly that of mere power, of heavenly gift, though he does not deny the fundamental idea of the community. Nay, the dominion of God and communion with God coming down from heaven to earth is salvation: for wherever it is established in a heart, there

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Cremer in the work above referred to, p. 194 ; C. Haupt in the review of my *Leben Jesu, Studien und Kritiken*, 1887.

heaven is on earth. It is God's gift, for it does not originate in a man's turning to God of himself, but in the eternal love conquering him and setting up its throne in him. But in doing that it establishes its kingdom in him, a government of God and a heavenly commonwealth, which, in uniting him with the Father in heaven, unites him also with all God's children. Connected with this is the other point which we have still to consider with a view to a provisional completion of Jesus' teaching about the kingdom of heaven. The teaching of Jesus becomes in the full sense of the word a revelation of salvation just through the idea of the kingdom as growing, the idea of the kingdom as a force of divine love creating a community: the very thing which in the eyes of its contemporaries was its poverty and insufficiency, constitutes its divine riches and all-sufficiency. If it had only had to proclaim as near or at a distance that kingdom of glory which the disciples had been led by the prophets to expect, it would indeed have been a blessing in a certain sense, but only as an inheritance of the pious who had made themselves worthy of it, not of poor sinners who needed the gracious hand of God stretched out to meet them, and even drawing them to come. It would not have come as a power to save the lost, but rather as a power of judgment for all who did not possess the wedding garment of righteousness. In point of fact, the Baptist's preaching of the kingdom has a certain peculiarity in this, that it makes the kingdom act immediately in the way of blessing or condemning: as it demands conversion, but only demands it, and therefore drowns the sweet sounds of promise by the thunders of approaching judgment. Here lay the necessity for Jesus to separate Himself more and more from the Baptist's methods, and here for the Baptist lay the danger of a subsequent perplexity regarding Him whom he had recognised as the coming one. Jesus takes another path than the Baptist expected, one apparently much humbler, but in reality much more glorious. He regards it from the first as His mission not to condemn but to save (John iii. 17; Matt. xi. 2-6). But He can only fulfil this true calling of a Saviour in virtue of an idea of the kingdom which represents not only the future glorious inheritance of the just, but, at the same time, and above all, contains a present condescension of

God's love, in virtue of which the spiritually poor may become divinely rich, and those who hunger and thirst after righteousness may be satisfied.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE SON OF MAN AND SON OF GOD

##### § 1. PERSONAL RELATION OF JESUS TO THE IDEA OF THE KINGDOM

If we now inquire further how and wherein the kingdom of God is at hand, we are referred to the person of Him who announces it. Not that a prophet could not have announced the kingdom as coming independent of his person. John the Baptist did that, but he did so by predicting one mightier than himself, who should come after him and set it up. Jesus, on the other hand, never referred to another and greater than Himself, not even to a continuuer and completer of His work, but charged Himself, and Himself only, with the setting up of the kingdom of heaven which He announced, from the sowing which founded it, to the judgment which would be the harvest. And this gives us, as the essential basis of His announcement of the kingdom, a self-consciousness quite unique, a consciousness of bearing in Himself personally that very thing which He desired to set up in the world; and this self-consciousness had to find expression, because, until it was declared, the announcement of the kingdom of heaven would, as it were, have remained floating in the air. There follows, therefore, as the next main part of His teaching, His testimony concerning Himself. Not that He made His person the subject of didactic discussion from the first. According to the Synoptists there prevails rather with regard to this main point a reserve which certainly has a historical basis, and which refers us to immediate and suggestive utterances of His self-consciousness, rather than to intentional discussions of it. This is a formal enigma which is to be solved along with the mystery of those utterances themselves.

### § 2. THE IDEA OF MESSIAH

The testimony of Jesus concerning Himself was not without a point of connection in the national faith. The expectation of a personal instrument of God for the setting up of His kingdom was given in the Old Testament, and, if all signs are not deceptive, filled the minds of the people at the time of Jesus more than ever. The hope of a king of salvation springing from the house of David had stamped itself upon the minds of the prophets as early as the days in which the theocratic State was contending with the powers of Western Asia; with the appearance of a God-sent and inspired deliverer were connected Israel's old hopes of salvation. The deliverer had not appeared, the commonwealth of God had broken down before the heathen; the expectation connected with the royal house of David fell into the background with that royal house in and after the Exile, and made way for other forms in which salvation was expected. The ideal form of the teaching and suffering servant of Jehovah (Isa. xl.-lxvi.), or the idea of a visitation of His people by God Himself (Mal. iii. 1), had taken the place of the king of salvation from the house of David. But in the time immediately before Christ, under the reciprocal action of the scribes going back to the old prophets and the oppression of foreign dominion, the old idea seems to have revived, and to have become for the first time really national. By applying to Him the references in the Psalms to the old kings, the name Son of God, which had already been given to the old Israelitish kings, was transferred to this son of David. But the name Jehovah's Anointed, or Messiah, which likewise belonged originally to the kings of Israel as such, was applied, on the basis of Ps. ii. 2, in a special sense to the coming deliverer. Although there was no formal dogma regarding this Messiah, but only the most various and incompatible opinions about Him (cf. John vii. 26, 27, 40-42), and though beside the expectation of a personal Messiah room was without doubt found for the expectation of God's kingdom without such mediation, yet in this notion of the realisation of the God-given hopes of Israel which was most popular and apparently most in keeping with the time, there was given a watchword

which Jesus had only to make His own openly in order to kindle in His favour any enthusiasm of which His people were capable.

### § 3. ATTITUDE OF JESUS TO THIS IDEA OF MESSIAH

He did not, however, do this, although He was conscious of being Israel's Messiah. There can be no doubt that He recognised Himself in the prophecies about a God-sent deliverer of Israel, and that even the name Messiah resounded in His heart. He was crucified for the confession of His Messiahship, and the statement that He, Jesus, is the Christ, that is, the Anointed, the Messiah, has so far become the fundamental Christian confession, that the two names Jesus and Christ have grown together as into one in the usage of His Church from the beginning. And He did not advance by degrees in the course of His public life from a mere prophetic to the Messianic consciousness; such an assumption would introduce a division into His teaching of which no trace can be discovered. The Messianic consciousness existed in Him from the beginning of His public life, as the presupposition of all His preaching and work. The narrative of His baptism, with which the Gospels begin His public life, is nothing but the birth-history of this consciousness, His awakening at God's touch to the clear sense of it, the anointing of the secret child of God to be the Son of God in the Messianic sense. When He ascribes to Himself power on earth to forgive sins, or in the circle of His disciples declares Himself to be the Bridegroom and them the friends of the Bridegroom, for whom there is no more longing and waiting, but only marriage rejoicings; when He describes Himself to the doubting Baptist as He who is to come; when, in the Sermon on the Mount, He contrasts Himself with Moses as the greater, as the fulfiller of the law and the prophets,—all this is possible only from a consciousness which raises Him far above the position of a mere prophet, the consciousness of being the personal founder and bearer of the kingdom of God, that is, the Messiah. Yet He did not utter this name, or throw it as an exciting watchword among the multitude. On the contrary, He stopped the mouths of the possessed, the mentally diseased,

who, thrilled by His mighty personality, met Him with the cry of what others may have secretly thought, "Thou art the Holy One of God," that is, the Messiah. Only at a late period, and on a lonely tour, did He accept from the lips of the Twelve the confession, "Thou art the Christ," and then forbade them to declare it to the people. Only at the very last, on the threshold of death, at His triumphant entrance to Jerusalem, did He cease to suppress the Messianic homage of His adherents, and for the first time freely and openly acknowledged Himself to be the Messiah, therewith signing His death warrant. And it is not difficult to discover the motives which led to this remarkable procedure. The same gulf lay between the popular idea of Messiah and His own Messianic consciousness, as lay between the popular idea of the kingdom of God and His own. In the popular expectation everything was converted into the sensible and worldly, and the name Messiah, in particular, had become the symbol of passionate political ideas of freedom and universal dominion, which lay much nearer the heart of the multitude than the spiritual need and the promised help of God. And therefore, if Jesus from the first had thrown the exciting name Messiah among the people, He would have called forth the most fatal misunderstandings and excitements, and have closed rather than opened a way for the entrance of His infinitely higher idea of the kingdom. He found Himself with regard to His people in the infinitely difficult position of proclaiming the kingdom of God to them without attaching to it its given correlate, the idea of the Messiah. There was set before Him from the first—after the careful consideration and rejection of the popular Messianic expectations attested in the narrative of the temptation—the almost hopeless task of first begetting a purer, higher, more spiritual idea of Messiah, in the mirror of which He might be recognised as the Messiah who had come. He therefore postpones His kingly rights until His work shall be completed, and He shall come in the glory of His Father (Matt. xvi. 27; cf. the use of the name King in Matt. xxv. 34). He veils His majesty in the simple, humble mantle of the prophet (Mark vi. 4; Luke xxiv. 19), in order to win, in that character, at a later period, and in the closest confidence, from a Peter the confession of belief, revealed not

by flesh and blood, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. xvi. 13). But He was compelled from the first, as is clear from Matt. xvi. 14, to disappoint the hopes which the multitude had placed on Him, nay, He had to fall a victim to the disappointment of their false Messianic expectations, in order really to bring in the kingdom of God, whose anointed King He in point of fact was.

#### § 4. THE NAME SON OF MAN: INTERPRETATIONS TO BE REJECTED

But if Jesus for these reasons avoided the name Messiah, He was under the necessity of giving Himself a name in His preaching which would somehow express His personal relation to the idea of the kingdom. And He did give Himself such a name—the Son of Man, which is the really significant description of Himself used by the Synoptics. It appears more than fifty times without reckoning the parallel passages, and there can be the less doubt of its originality that it is found only in His mouth, and not applied to Him by others. This name—just like the expression kingdom of heaven—did not pass over into the usage of the apostolic age.<sup>1</sup> But Jesus in describing Himself to His hearers as the Son of Man, has propounded a riddle which has come down to our own day. Theology has only recently occupied itself in earnest with the solution of the riddle, and opinions on it are so divergent, that the way for its examination must be cleared by setting aside a whole series of them.<sup>2</sup> We must, above all, reject that view, which is still common, that Jesus meant to describe His human nature by the name Son of Man, just as He meant to describe His divine nature by the name Son of God. There is no biblical ground for that view what-

<sup>1</sup> Once only, Acts vii. 56, the dying Stephen—in manifest allusion to like words of Jesus Himself before the Sanhedrim, Matt. xxvi. 64—describes Him as the Son of Man; Rev. i. 13, xiv. 14, are allusions to Dan. vii. 13, and not to Jesus' own words.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. specially Holtzmann's "Kritische Uebersicht der bisherigen Verhandlungen über den Namen Menschensohn," in Hilgenfeld's *Zeitsch. f. Wissensch. Theol.* 1865, and Usteri, *Die Selbstbezeichnung Jesu als des Menschen Sohn*, 1886. Two discussions in which the modern literature is adduced.

ever. The concepts of the divine and human nature in Christ's person belong to the theology of the fifth century, and not to the biblical mode of thinking or speaking, and Jesus could not possibly have felt any need of again and again assuring His contemporaries of His true human nature, which none of them could doubt. The turn which has recently been given to this dogmatic interpretation is no improvement: "He who among mere men again and again calls Himself the Son of Man, means thereby to declare that His human existence is something miraculous, a form of existence which is not original to Him."<sup>1</sup> The logic of this interpretation is odd. He who makes a special claim to an attribute which he has in common with many, may mean to suggest that he is what others are only in a special and higher sense, but never that he is the very opposite, or that he was originally something else. And therefore mere logic would rather justify the interpretation of Schleiermacher, which is also adopted by Neander and Reuss, that Jesus describes Himself simply as man, as the ideal man, wishing to suggest the very thing which Paul means by the second Adam, the spiritual and heavenly man.<sup>2</sup> In support of this interpretation may be adduced Mark ii. 27, 28; John v. 27; but the great majority of passages do not suggest it, and the idea itself contains an element of abstract theology which seems out of place in the mind of Jesus. The view of Baur, that Jesus, in contrast with the brilliant Messianic expectations of the Jews, wished to describe Himself as one who deemed nothing human foreign to Himself, nay, whose vocation it was to endure everything lowly and human, can with any plausibility appeal to not more than one of all the passages that speak of the Son of Man, Matt. viii. 20 ("The Son of Man hath not where to lay His head"). The fact that majesty and glorification are predicated of the Son of Man just as emphatically as lowliness and suffering, destroys this as well as every explanation which finds in the term, above all, an expression of the lowliness and humiliation of the Messiah.<sup>3</sup> Finally, when Cremer finds that the name Son of

<sup>1</sup> Thus Meyer in his *Commentary on Matt.*, and Gess in his *Lehre von der Person Christi*.

<sup>2</sup> This was also formerly my view in my *Christologie des N. T.*

<sup>3</sup> This even against the most recent note in its favour in Wendt's *Lehre*

Man does not emphasise so much the being a man as the being a son, and, on that account, correlates it with the seed of the woman, the so-called protevangel (Gen. iii. 15), he not only overlooks the fact that the New Testament never refers to that protevangel, but also that Jesus, in order to express that idea, must have called Himself, not the *υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*, but the *υἱὸς τῆς γυναικός*, or the *γεννητὸς γυναικός* (Matt. xi. 11).

### § 5. INVESTIGATION

All such explanations are attempts to guess a riddle that must be solved in a regular way. Of itself Son of Man in Hebrew and Aramaic simply means child of man, that is, man,—with perhaps a certain poetic tinge, and with a subordinate conception of dependence and weakness. The expression is frequent in the Old Testament in this sense (cf. e.g. Ps. viii. 5 ; Ezek. ii. 1, iii. 1, iv. 1, etc.), and appears in the plural, just as in Mark iii. 28. But though this fundamental meaning could never be lost in any further defining of the conception, it cannot be sufficient in the case of Jesus. As we have already said, Jesus had no need to assure anyone in the days of His flesh that He was a child of man; and the view that He desired—as in the Old Testament phrases, thy servant, thy handmaid (instead of I)—to paraphrase His ego in this way, is destroyed by the twofold consideration that He must then have said this Son of Man, and that Jesus, as the Gospels show, did not avoid the simple I. For if, in certain cases, He makes use of the name Son of Man instead of the simple I, He manifestly wishes in some way to mark what is peculiar to Himself. And this mark of peculiarity need not be sought only in the predicate, as has often been done, for so far as it lies in the

*Jesus.* According to Wendt, Son of Man designates the union of the Messianic dignity with the lowliness of human nature. Then we must ask, who at that time needed to be assured of the human nature of the Messiah? Or if the lowliness of this human nature is to consist in its creaturely weakness, whether there is any other kind of man than weak, creaturely? Jesus would in this way have again and again assured men of what was self-evident to every one. The way in which Wendt sets aside a number of passages as unhistorical, which speak of the glory of the Son of Man, I regard as arbitrary criticism.

predicate it need not lie in the subject. But in those cases, there must indeed be a mutual relation between the predicate and the subject, which tells us that He, in virtue of a certain quality, is able to do or suffer this or that. Now, if we look at the different declarations about the Son of Man,—the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head, hath power on earth to forgive sins, is Lord of the Sabbath, can be blasphemed but in a way that may be pardoned, is come to seek the lost, is come to serve and give His life, will suffer many things and must be rejected, perishes as it is written of Him, will come again in the clouds of heaven, will sit on the throne of His glory, etc.,—all these widely-diverging utterances have one thing in common, they all treat of the official sufferings and doings of Jesus; they all speak of Him in so far as He has the task of setting up the kingdom of heaven upon earth. In a word, they are all in substance related to His Messiahship, so much so that in all these passages—with the exception of Matt. xvi. 13, where the riddle of the name Son of Man is really put so as to force them to a Messianic answer—Messiah might just as well be substituted for Son of Man. And, therefore, all parties<sup>2</sup> are now at one in regarding the name Son of Man as a veiled indication of His Messianic calling. But as the name Son of Man has nothing to do with the Messiahship so far as language is concerned, it manifestly could only obtain this meaning through an allusion to something which lay within His hearers' knowledge, and which already included this meaning—an allusion to something in the Old Testament. Among all the passages in the Old Testament in which the expression Son of Man appears, there is only one (Dan. vii. 13) in which it has a Messianic sense: "I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him; His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." That this passage from Daniel must lie at the basis of Jesus' enigmatic self-designation is now recognised, not indeed universally, but by ever-increasing numbers.

And really—when the Book of Enoch, that Jewish, and in part Jewish-Christian Apocalypse of the century of Jesus, has, in virtue of this passage of Daniel, directly stamped the name Son of Man as the name of Messiah; when our canonical Apocalypse twice applies Daniel's ὅμοιος νίκῃ ἀνθρώπου (i. 13, xiv. 14) to the glorified Christ, and Jesus Himself on two occasions unmistakably refers to Dan. vii. 13, when He speaks (Matt. xxiv. 30, xxvi. 64) of the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven—it is difficult to conceive how any one can object to that origin. The fact lies clearly before us, that the same passage of the Book of Daniel, a book much read and highly honoured in our Lord's day, furnishes the conception of the kingdom of heaven,—the eternal kingdom to be received from God in the clouds of heaven,—and the conception of the Son of Man, as the receiver and bearer of this kingdom. The mutual relation which we perceive, in all the declarations of Jesus, between His character as Son of Man and His calling as bringer of the kingdom of God, lies before us originally in that passage of Daniel. And therewith the whole riddle is at bottom solved. The Son of Man is the God-invested bearer of the kingdom that descends from above, that is to be founded from heaven; it is He who brings in the kingdom of God.

#### § 6. CONCLUSION OF THE INVESTIGATION

There are still a few accessory circumstances to be considered, and first, the difference which certainly exists between the passage of Daniel and the self-designation of Jesus. There we have only "one like a Son of Man," conformable to the wavering and pictorial character of the vision, and this visionary form in the clouds of heaven is not, as one often hears, a symbol of the Nation of Saints of which mention is afterwards made in the brief exposition of the vision, nor is it the appearance of a personal Messiah of which this exposition knows nothing; but just as the four world-kingdoms are symbolised by beasts of prey, this is a symbol of the kingdom of the saints, that kingdom which is to come down from heaven to earth. On the other hand, Jesus has recast that wavering image into a definite per-

sonal designation, the *ως νιὸς ἀνθρώπου* into *νιὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*. We may be in doubt as to whether this change was first made by Him, or had been made before Him through the developing tradition of His people;—that depends upon the question whether those parts of the Book of Enoch which contain the name Son of Man, as the name of Messiah, are to be regarded as pre-Christian or post-Christian. However that may be, the recasting of *ως νιὸς ἀνθρώπου* into *ὁ νιὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*<sup>1</sup> was quite natural and necessary as soon as the passage in Daniel was referred to the personal Messiah of the prevailing popular expectation, or as soon as an individual man recognised himself and his personal calling in that image of Daniel. Nevertheless, in the days of Jesus, Son of Man could not have been a current popular designation of Messiah, and the significance of Jesus' choice of the name rests on that very fact. In spite of the Messianic use of the designation in the Book of Enoch, we do not find in the Gospels that Jesus' self-designation as Son of Man would have been without hesitation interpreted in a Messianic sense. Nay, the question of Jesus (Matt. xvi. 13): “Whom do men say, and whom do ye say, that I the Son of Man am?” would scarcely have been possible if the name itself had already contained a formal confession of Messiah. On the contrary, the choice of the name is manifestly connected with the intention and need of Jesus to conceal His Messianic consciousness, lest He should stir up the perverted and passionate expectations of His people. By fixing on this passage of Daniel alone of all the Messianic passages of the Old Testament, a passage which does not originally contain the personal Messiah at all, He makes the whole question of Messiah rest formally on Himself, and not only propounds to His hearers the significance of His person as a riddle exciting to reflection, but at the same time turns their attention from the outwardness of the Messianic expecta-

<sup>1</sup> The genitive of the article *τοῦ ἀνθρώπου* is nowhere, so far as I see, explained by expositors. Weiss (*Bibl. Theol. of the N. T.*, Trans. T. & T. Clark) thinks the genitive of the article might designate the man according to his genus(?). The late Dr. Hupfeld gave me an explanation of it founded on the Hebrew rule of grammar, that if a concept composed of a nominative and genitive is to have the article, it is placed before the genitive,

tion to its kernel. He simply and concisely, with His ever-repeated self-designation as the Son of Man, answers the importunate question of the people, "Who art Thou?" I am what the prophet saw in that vision, the bringer and bearer of the kingdom of heaven; hold to that, and it will carry you further.<sup>1</sup> But Jesus preferred this self-designation to every other, not only from considerations of necessity or formal teaching. It also answered positively better than any other to His self-consciousness, and in its peculiarity and the fulness of its relations it reveals to us an instinctive harmony with a whole series of tones which blend, as it were, in a perfect melody within this self-consciousness. In the first place, this title, which is no title but the avoidance of every such thing, reveals the purpose of Jesus to allow His person to recede as far as possible behind the divine cause which He represents. It is enough that the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God which He brings, is contained in the name Son of Man; the choice of the most unassuming name is like a confirmation of what is repeatedly expressed in the Fourth Gospel: "I seek not Mine own honour, but that of Him who sent Me." But the essential character and nature of this kingdom and its setting up is also given in that watch-word of Daniel. The human figure appearing in the clouds of heaven is in Dan. vii. contrasted with beast forms, beasts of prey which rise out of the depths of the sea. They represent the mighty world-kingsdoms which precede the kingdom of God, and therefore signify human, but brutal, nay bestial human character, while there is kept in reserve for the kingdom of God, in the human figure, the true ideal human character with its heavenly descent. As the beasts of prey are far superior to the child of man in physical power, though he is still more superior to them in his higher origin and God-related character, so the kingdom of God is not to enter into the combat of brutal power and physical strength with the kingdoms of the world, but to overcome them by the ascendancy of the spirit and the power of God.

<sup>1</sup> How far this method of Jesus agrees with the famous saying of Melanchthon, which is worth pondering: "To know Christ is to know His benefits, not to dispute about His nature," is only incidentally noted here.

Thus Jesus with His ideas of the kingdom of God stood over against the world, outwardly impotent but strong in God, strong in the persuasion of a higher mission and heavenly powers ; and here we may see how the symbol of Daniel could express at once the two sides of His Messiahship, its lowliness and its loftiness, one or other of which is so often onesidedly sought in it. For this does justice also to the thought of the ideal humanity which has been too abstractly and exclusively sought in the "Son of Man." For although the entire expression, and especially the choice of the word "enasch" (Aramaic for the Hebrew "enosch," which describes man in his weakness and frailty), emphasises mainly the weakness and natural impotence of the divine bearer of the kingdom, yet His full loftiness and glory is marked by contrasting Him as appearing in the clouds of heaven with the beast forms springing out of the deep. The Father had been able to intrust Him with the setting up of His kingdom, and He knew Himself to be superior to the world and all its powers, not because He was a man like others, but because He was the man who, borne on the clouds of heaven, stood before the Eternal, at home in heaven, and looking on the face of God—that is, the man after God's heart. These are elements or deductions from the idea of the Son of Man in Daniel, which we can, of course, only conjecture here but cannot prove, but that they lived in the soul of Jesus is certain from other facts of His self-consciousness. The one most essential, but also the most certain, is, that in calling Himself the Son of Man, He knew Himself to be that man who bears in Himself the power of the kingdom of heaven, in which the dominion of God and communion with God come down from heaven to earth.

#### § 7. THE NAME SON OF GOD

Yet it is not the name Son of Man, but His self-designation as the Son of God, which leads us into the heart of the self-consciousness of Jesus. But this likewise needs a thorough investigation, as still deeper misunderstandings have been attached to it.

## OLD TESTAMENT USAGE

The self-designation of Jesus as Son of God appears much more seldom in the Synoptics than the name Son of Man, while in the Fourth Gospel the converse holds good. In the Synoptics it is throughout more a suggestion, either by calling God His Father, or by plainly designating Himself as the Son, in a connection which leaves no doubt as to the complement "of God," such as Matt. xi. 27; Mark xiii. 12—it is involved also in the Parables of the Vineyard and the Marriage Supper (Mark xii. 6; Matt. xxii. 2).<sup>1</sup> The name Son of God—as distinguished from the Son of Man—is more frequently applied to Jesus by others. He is addressed as Son of God by the voice from heaven at the Baptism and the Transfiguration, by Satan in the Temptation, by the diseased and the healthy who wished to do Him homage (Matt. viii. 29, xiv. 33), by Peter in his celebrated confession (Matt. xvi. 16), by the high priest questioning Him at His trial, by His enemies mocking Him upon the cross. This use of the name by others from the first shows that it was one already current in Israel, and one that had its roots in the Old Testament, and therefore we must go back to the Old Testament for the sense in which Jesus claims it for Himself. The angels are called sons of God, Gen. vi. 1; Job i. 6, ii. 1; also the magistrates and judges, Ps. lxxxii. 6. Israel is called God's son (firstborn), Ex. xxii. 4; Hos. ii. 1; in Deut. xiv. 1 and Hos. i. 10, individual Israelites are also called sons of God, or are to be called in the future sons of the living God. The theocratic king, in particular, is called God's son (Ps. ii. 7). Jehovah will be to him a Father, and "will make him His firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth" (2 Sam. vii. 14; Ps. lxxxix. 27). What is the meaning of the lofty name in these cases? It manifestly means in the case of the angels and magistrates, that they are the image and bearers of the divine majesty; the latter are for that reason directly called in Ps. lxxxii. 6, Elohim. It means in the case of Israel and the Israelites, that they are the favourites of God, chosen in

<sup>1</sup> The baptismal formula Matt. xxviii. 19, in which likewise appears the Son simply, is not, for reasons to be adduced later, to be regarded as the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus.

preference to all nations, as the connection in the different passages plainly shows. The theocratic king is a son of God in the same sense, as 2 Sam. vii. 14 speaks of the fatherly correction and pity that is applied to him especially. The idea of a majesty resembling God's is united with this in Ps. lxxxix. 27, for the words presuppose a divine sonship of all kings on the earth. Ps. ii. 7 adds yet a further moment : "Thou art my son ; this day have I begotten thee"; that is, I have made thee My son by anointing thee to be king, by anointing thee with My spirit. The divine sonship there is based on a generation, though subsequent and emblematic, that is, a divine communication of life. This very passage has now become of special importance for the New Testament, as in virtue of it the Messiah (ver. 2) received the popular name of the Son of God. Jesus is greeted by the people and by Peter in his confession as Son of God in this sense which makes the names ὁ Χριστός and ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ directly synonymous (cf. Matt. xvi. 16 and the parallels in Mark and Luke; also Matt. xxvi. 63; John i. 49), and in this sense He is examined on His divine Sonship by the high priest. No one ever thought of it as describing a superhuman, Godlike being, or anything else than a man uniquely loved, chosen and endowed by God. The fact has indeed been appealed to in support of a contrary view, that the confession of Jesus being the Son of God was treated by the Sanhedrim as blasphemy; but it must not be forgotten that the Jews understood by blasphemy, not merely blasphemous utterances in themselves, but every assumption of a prerogative or privilege which could only be conferred by God, the right of forgiving sins, for example, or, as in the case of Jesus, claiming to be Messiah. Now, if Jesus accepted from the lips of Peter a name which was current among the people, or gave an affirmative answer to the question of the high priest without making any express reservation of a different meaning, it is clear that He can have attached to it no new and unheard of meaning.

#### § 8. THE MEANING OF JESUS

Still there is a difference between His meaning and use of this phrase and the people's, similar to that which existed

between His idea of the kingdom and theirs. His meaning is much deeper, more inward and more sublime in its humility. He does not fix upon the kingly Messianic interpretation of the name ; on the contrary, He selected and stamped the name Son of Man as the designation of His office and calling ; the conception which underlies His idea of divine Sonship is that of God's beloved and God's likeness, which is originally found in the Old Testament. For He felt Himself to be a Son of God, and called God in heaven "My Father" long before the awakening of His Messianic consciousness at the baptism (Luke ii. 49) ; and it was not so much an official as a personal consciousness, the consciousness of being personally beloved of God, which at the baptism itself re-echoed in His heart in the voice from heaven : "Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The "in whom I am well pleased" indicates therefore the reason of this personal relation of love and communion which is expressed by the name Son of God. We reach the same result when we consider His application of the name to others ; what He regards as the fundamental meaning and foundation of the divine sonship then plainly emerges. He applies the name in the plural not merely, as in Luke xx. 36, to those made perfect, who in the resurrection are to be transformed into the real image of God, but also (Matt. v. 9, 45) to children of earth so far as they in character bear the image of the heavenly Father. If the peacemakers are to be called sons of God, sons of the God whom Paul repeatedly calls the θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης ; if men are to become sons of God by learning to love their enemies, after the example of God, ever good, who makes His sun to rise upon the evil and the good, it is manifest that He must have regarded the divine sonship as resting above all on inner moral likeness to God. For it is that alone which makes a man beloved of God, one in whom He can be well pleased. That is, as it were, the family likeness to the heavenly Father appearing in a man's spiritual aspect, which brings on him the smile of the Father's good pleasure. Now, if Jesus called those who do the will of His father, His sisters and brethren (Mark iii. 35), it is clear that He also, and above all, knew Himself to be a Son of God for the same reason which led Him to consider them as children of God, though with a distinction which we

must not overlook; this likeness to God and favour of God holds good of others in a comparative sense, but of Him absolutely. And this distinction, which is expressed in the Fourth Gospel by the epithet *μονογενής* added to *υἱός* (cf. Mark xii. 6), is observed in the Synoptists, where Jesus designates Himself *the Son* in contrast to the *υἱοῖς τοῦ Θεοῦ* in the plural, and never joins with His followers in a common "our Father," but throughout keeps apart the "your Father and My Father" (cf. e.g. Matt. vi. 32, x. 29, with xi. 27, xviii. 35, xx. 23). Here therefore, on the basis of the same idea of a sonship of God possible to man and representing the highest destiny of man, lies a sublimity and uniqueness of His relation to God which raises Him above all other sons of men and gives Him the character of true divinity, not, however, to the exclusion of His true humanity, but rather to its realisation in the highest original sense. In other words, when Jesus calls Himself the Son of God, He does so as the man who is truly one with God, who as perfectly loved by God and like God can alone serve as the instrument of a complete revelation of the eternal love, and can bring His brethren into that unrestrained fellowship with God which He Himself possessed, but which they lacked (cf. Matt. xi. 27). And from this may be understood the relation of His consciousness of being a Son to His consciousness of being the Messiah. While the name Son of God was to the people only the outer title of honour which they attached to the Messiah expected from the house of David, the divine Sonship was to Jesus rather the expression of His inward right to Messiahship. He did not regard Himself as the Son of God because He knew Himself on other grounds to be the Messiah, but because He knew Himself to be the beloved Son of the heavenly Father; because in that crisis of His life at the baptism in the Jordan He had become conscious of His own unique personal relation to God, He also, at the same place and for the same reason, became conscious of His unique vocation for the world—His Messianic vocation.

#### § 9. THE QUESTION OF DIVINE DESCENT

The question may be raised whether Jesus in this consciousness of being a Son, included also the idea of a

special descent from God. Phrases such as Matt. xvii. 26, xxii. 42, even without reference to well-known Johannine passages, might lead to that conclusion. In the first passage, which treats of the obligation to pay the temple tax, Jesus, by the question, "Of whom do the kings of the earth levy taxes, of strangers or of their own children?" places Himself, in contrast with other men, under the conception of a member of a divine family, and thus seems to claim for Himself a special relation of origin to God. And in the other passage, where, on the basis of Ps. cx. 1, He examines His opponents about their idea of Messiah, and places the divine Sonship of Messiah in opposition to the Davidic sonship which they emphasise, the inference is suggested, that as the Davidic sonship expresses a relation of descent, the divine Sonship comprises such a relation also. Still these inferences are quite uncertain, for in that question about the temple tax, the family relation, as distinguished from the subjection of strangers, is only a picture—a picture of the freedom of God's children from such outward institutions as contrasted with the bondage of the servant of the law, and the plural *viol* may not at all refer to Jesus only, but also to Peter along with Him. In the exposition of Ps. cx. 1, again, Jesus is not at all concerned with the descent of Messiah, but with the opposing of that inner title of right on which His Messianic consciousness rests, to the outer genealogical title which is everything to the scribes. He would say to His opponents, You know very little of the Messiah if you only know that He is to be a scion of David's house. What constitutes the Messiah is not family descent, but a unique spiritual relation to God. However probable in itself it may be that Jesus cherished the idea of a special divine descent, we must decline to answer the question whether that idea was included in the Son-consciousness of the Synoptists. But even though that idea could be proved, it would only amount to a conviction of having come forth from God as a human personality in a unique way, that is, of having been originally planned and prepared in a very special way for that unique relation of communion with God, and for His vocation as Saviour, which was rooted in that communion; it would not imply the consciousness of having, as a divine person, passed from a former heavenly life

(pre-existence) into an earthly existence. There is no trace of such a consciousness in His testimony about Himself as recorded in the Synoptists, and we may even say that there is no room for it. The very name Son of God witnesses against it. Not only because, in its source in the Old Testament and in its application to groups of men (Matt. v. 9, 45), it always presupposes the human essence of those to whom it is given, but also because, in idea and language, it distinguishes its bearer from God Himself, and therefore marks him out as human. For "the one God" of whom Jesus speaks is the Father, and the Father is the one God. The Son of God cannot therefore be God Himself, but only a being different from God, who stands to Him in a special relation of Sonship. We should not in any way confuse the name Son of God with the later name "God the Son," uttered in the doctrine of the Church,—a name which sprang from an entirely different world of ideas, from the conception developed in the intervening period of a threefold personality of the divine nature. *This does not agree with mine, cf. Harriss note p. 17, and compare classmate's division of pages.)*

## § 10. PURELY HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS OF CHRIST

In view of the meagreness of the immediate testimony of Jesus to Himself in the Synoptists on the one hand, and the importance of the matter on the other, it is the more advisable to pay attention to the indirect utterances of the consciousness of Jesus, and thus once more prove the foregoing result, which is still contested in favour of later dogmatic conclusions. From these it is manifest, that with all the sublimity and uniqueness of His consciousness of Sonship, Jesus felt and confessed throughout that He was a man in God's presence. Immediately after the sealing of His consciousness of Sonship in the baptism, He places Himself unaffectedly and unreservedly under the generic notion "man"—in the narrative of the temptation, unquestionably related by Himself to His disciples. "Man lives not by bread alone" (Matt. iv. 4). There also he repeatedly calls God His Lord, and acknowledges the universal human obligation of praying to Him (vv. 7, 10), expressions which cannot possibly be harmonised with a consciousness of being Himself God. What can be more

human as distinguished from God than prayer? A God cannot pray. But according to the testimony of the evangelists, Jesus prays regularly—in Gethsemane, even on the cross. He prays: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" words which are quite impossible in the mouth and heart of one who is himself God. Elsewhere also Jesus acknowledges every innocent attribute of human nature, while on the other hand He refuses the divine attributes of omniscience, omnipotence, and a holiness which is raised above temptation. Not only does He hunger in the wilderness and thirst upon the cross, at one hour He rejoices, and at another He is sorrowful even unto death (Luke x. 21; Matt. xxii. 38). He can also waver, hesitate, and change His resolutions—as is manifest from the narrative about the Canaanitish woman. Nay, as His soul-struggle in Gethsemane shows, He apparently knows not what is possible or not possible with God, or what He is to wish and pray for. He acknowledges the opposite of divine omniscience, the limited knowledge of the future which holds good of all prophets, when He declares: "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, not even the Son, but only the Father" (Mark xiii. 32). He likewise acknowledges the opposite of divine omnipotence: "To sit on My right hand, and on My left, is not Mine to give; but for those for whom it is prepared of My Father" (Matt. xx. 23). According to these words, He did not co-operate in that "preparing," that is to say, He had no share in the divine plan, but rather had to learn it like any other man, and to praise the Father for it as Lord of heaven and earth (Matt. xxii. 23). Finally, the strange words in which, in presence of the rich young man, He repudiates all claim to the goodness of the holy God, cannot after all this surprise us: "Why callest thou Me good? there is none good but one, that is, God." That does not mean an acknowledgment of any evil, but neither does it mean what a narrow dogmatic exposition would bring out of it. It does not mean, if thou callest Me good thou must hold Me to be more than a human master, thou must hold Me to be God Himself. For it is manifest that Jesus cannot in one breath speak of God as one, and place Himself as God beside Him. Jesus desires to urge the young man, who is going about so liberally with the word good, to the highest and deepest sense

of the word, in which it is applicable to God only. God is the absolutely Good, that is, the morally perfect Being (Matt. v. 48); it is His nature to be good; He is, as Jas. i. 13 says, *ἀνεπαρτός κακῶν*, absolutely raised above all temptation to evil. The Son of Man, who is still in the midst of moral conflict and growth, and first attains perfection through temptation, is not good in this sense, that is, perfectly holy, exalted above all temptation (cf. Heb. v. 8). And we have only to call to mind the narrative of the temptation, the repulse of Peter dissuading Him from the way of suffering, or the soul-conflict in Gethsemane, to see how openly He acknowledges these conflicts and temptations, and how little He denies that even He has to sacrifice His own will in order to live in God's will only. All these facts make it so certain that the consciousness of Jesus was at bottom purely human, that only an unconquerable dogmatic prejudice, springing from scholastic tradition and misunderstanding of what religion requires, can resist the force of this testimony.

### § 11. SINLESSNESS OF JESUS

On the other hand, from that field of inquiry we have last alluded to, His relation to the will of God, there starts up a unique majesty of Jesus for which the name "Divinity of Christ," a name which is justifiable though capable of being misunderstood, is not too high.<sup>1</sup> In the first place, notwithstanding the separation of His will from the Father's, and all the struggle for submission which even He was not spared, the invariable watchword of His life was, "Not My will, but Thine be done." In other words, in spite of that "no one is good but one, that is, God," He was perfectly sinless. The express evidences of this are the weakest, as when on His way to death He contrasts Himself as the only green branch on the tree of Israel with the dry boughs on that tree (Luke xxiii. 30), or when He designates those who do the

<sup>1</sup> The justice of the expression depends on the religious and moral absoluteness of Jesus, in virtue of which He is the perfect revelation of a God in Himself secret. If God is holy love, how could the predicate of divinity be withheld from the man in whom this love has appeared in perfection.

will of His Father as His brethren and sisters (*Mark* iii. 35), thus presupposing the doing of the divine will as manifestly His own character. Far more striking and convincing are the indirect testimonies, as they come to us from His silent conduct, or force themselves upon us as the indispensable presupposition of the other greatest and most certain facts of His consciousness. He who with incomparable keenness has pursued sin into the inmost recesses of the heart, found no shadow of guilt, even in the most critical hours of His life, arising in His own heart to transform the countenance of His heavenly Father into the countenance of a judge—not in the storm which threatened His life, not in the total wreck of His earthly hopes, not even in Gethsemane or on Golgotha. He has given to the world its sweetest name for God, the name heavenly Father, and He took it from the child-feeling of His own heart, as a right which first of all belonged to Himself. What other man in Israel, on the soil which law and prophets had prepared for the knowledge of God's holiness and man's sin, could have dared in reverence to claim this right as one who knew of no shadow of sin to separate him from the holy God? It was the thought of His life to set up the kingdom of God among men, the kingdom of God as a heart-communion with the holy God on a true ethical footing. How could this idea of His life have been possible unless the communion with God which He wished to set up in the world had existed in Himself in full possession! And it was His original possession, not first acquired by overcoming the sin that adhered even to Him. For if that had been the case, as many fancy, that even He had first to overcome an ungodly element in His own nature, and had done so only just before His public ministry, before He was laid hold of and conquered by the Messianic consciousness, then the gospel of the kingdom which He preached would necessarily become a gospel of self-redemption, an inducement to follow Him in the conquering of sin. But His institution of the Supper, the most certain fact we have of Him, attests that He knew all men, even the best and most pious in Israel, to be in need of an atonement and a Mediator, but Himself to be the spotless Lamb who makes atonement for them with His blood (*Matt.* xxvi. 28). And therefore His life must be

conceived rather as a development from original innocence to completed holiness, than as the continuous preservation of a disposition originally at one with God through all His intercourse with an evil world, which imposed on Him self-denials ever more painful, but by that very fact became to Him the course to the goal of divine perfection. That is the picture of His life as outlined in our Gospels. At the beginning (Luke ii. 49) it gives evidence of such a state of heart in Him, that what to others is a powerless command of duty, bears for Him rather the character of most free and natural necessity—"Must I not be about my Father's business,"—and it closes with a moral conflict and victory beyond which no further can be imagined, because in it the final offering, the perfect sacrifice of self, has been offered to the love of God.

### § 12. HIS ONENESS WITH GOD

In this sinless perfection we have the precondition of that last and highest element in Him which the Church afterwards called His divine nature or Godhead, though original Christianity was content with viewing it as an anointing with the Holy Spirit without measure, an unlimited possession of the Divine Spirit; this is His relation of complete unity with the Father which made Him the personal bearer of the kingdom of heaven, the procurer of communion with God for all. He Himself, in sublime self-contemplation, describes this relation in a saying which is without parallel in the Synoptics, though it possesses the highest guarantee of genuineness as belonging to the original collection of Logia in its twofold attestation, Matt. xi. 27; Luke x. 22: *πάντα μοι παρεδόθη ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρός μου καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐπιγινώσκει τὸν νιὸν, εἰ μὴ ὁ πατήρ οὐδὲ τὸν πατέρα τῆς ἐπιγινώσκει, εἰ μὴ ὁ νιὸς, καὶ φῶς ἐὰν βούληται ὁ νιὸς ἀποκαλύψει.*<sup>1</sup> All things—

<sup>1</sup> The different Marcionite reading which is found in the older Fathers —*οὐδεὶς θύμω τὸν πατέρα, εἰ μὴ ὁ νιὸς, καὶ τὸν νιὸν εἰ μὴ ὁ πατήρ καὶ φῶς ὁ νιὸς ἀποκαλύψει,*—contains no real change of doctrinal meaning. Moreover, it is very doubtful, as Keim and others assume, that it is the more genuine reproduction of the words of Jesus. The placing first of the Father, and knowledge of the Father, is more probably an inversion of position, as the whole saying was occasioned by the denying of the Son on the part of His contemporaries. See my *Leben Jesu*, ii. p. 254.

He is able to say—are delivered to Me of My Father, that is, as the connection shows, not the whole government of the world, but all that is hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed to babes, the whole of God's revelation in the gospel. The words that immediately follow mean the same thing in another form: "No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and He to whomsoever He will reveal Him." All knowledge of God as the heavenly Father, as holy love imparting itself, and along with that, all satisfying and comforting communion with God, comes through Him and Him only; as it is said in the Fourth Gospel: "No man cometh to the Father but by Me." This Son, so unique and exalted, is for that very reason a mystery to men: "No man knoweth the Son but the Father,"—the Father alone knows all that He has intrusted to the Son, and laid upon Him. Not that that is to remain a mystery, while the mystery of the Father would be revealed through the Son. The Father also reveals the secret of the Son, as, for example, to Peter when He declared of him: "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father in heaven" (Matt. xvi. 17), though at that moment no man had recognised the Son as Messiah in the spiritual divine sense. Jesus Himself, therefore, gives us here the explanation of the name Son which He claims in a unique sense with regard to the Father. It is a mutual relation that has no equal, a mutual knowledge of which the world has no conception, a relation of inmost confidence with one another. But it is not, on that account, a metaphysical mystery. Peter did not see any metaphysical relation in Jesus (Matt. xvi. 16), but a mystery of salvation; and that also is the point in Matt. xi., as testified by the words which follow: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." It is a very curious error which supposes that the uniqueness and perfection of His relation as a Son must overstep the ideal limits of the human personality. If the pure in heart are to see God (Matt. v. 8), must not the countenance of God in its whole purity be reflected in the absolutely pure human heart? And if God has indeed prepared the heart of man to be His dwelling-place on earth, must not His whole fulness dwell in the human heart which is fully opened to Him, and offers Him a

perfect home, in which there is a sanctuary undefiled. And our conception of the relation of Jesus as Son is conclusively established by the *παρεδόθη* of Matt. xi. 27. All things are delivered unto Me of My Father; but delivered by Him whom He not only extols in true human devotion as His Father, but at the same time as Lord of heaven and earth; they are the original property of the Father, and not of the Son. That is the synoptic testimony of Jesus about Himself. It contains no trace of that speculative theology with which the Church of later days, applying Greek philosophical conceptions to biblical views, attempted to explain to herself the union of the divine and human which was consummated in Him; it does not even contain a trace of the pre-existence idea, in which Paul and John gave to the Church a starting-point for that subsequent theology.<sup>1</sup> But, it may be asked, what does this christological self-testimony lack to make Jesus known to us as the Saviour of the world —to describe Him as the man who by personally realising in Himself communion with God, needed only to communicate Himself to His brethren in order to communicate to them God and eternal life?

## CHAPTER IV

### THE HEAVENLY FATHER AND THE WORLD

#### § 1. THE NEW IDEA OF GOD

It is clear that the restoration of the kingdom of God must begin with a new revelation of God, springing out of the consciousness of Jesus. The true and perfect knowledge of God of which Jesus speaks in the words just discussed (Matt. xi. 27),

<sup>1</sup> The attempt has indeed been made, by combining Matt. xxi. 34 with Luke xi. 49, to make Jesus synonymous with the *σοφία θεοῦ* (retained by Luke from the common source), which would to some extent correspond with what started the apostles in their doctrine of pre-existence. But even assuming that Matthew, by putting an *ἴγε* instead of the *σοφία θεοῦ*, desired to identify Jesus with the hypostatic wisdom of God (Prov. viii.), that would still be only an idea of the first evangelist's, not Jesus' own.

is indeed the immediate precondition of that communion with God which is to be brought about. It is not therefore difficult to resolve the misunderstanding which has led to the recent assertion that Jesus had no new idea of God to announce, as His God was simply the God of the Old Testament.<sup>1</sup> All New Testament views are, of course, as already remarked, rooted in the Old Testament. But they only come to flower in the New Testament, and in relation to their Old Testament stage of development they appear as really new. How then should the fundamental idea of all, the idea of God, form an exception to this rule? Moreover, the consciousness which Jesus expresses is quite unlike that of one who merely preaches the God of the law and the prophets. When He says: "No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him," He unquestionably asserts an idea of God dwelling in Him and to be communicated by Him, which neither Moses nor Isaiah before Him cherished. Accordingly, His apostles—in direct contradiction to that modern assertion—were able to make His whole gospel consist in the revelation of a new and perfect idea of God: "This is the message we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John i. 5).

## § 2. THE NAME FATHER

Jesus Himself, in the name Father which He put in the place of the Old Testament Jahveh or Jehovah, or Adonai, Lord, which was read and spoken for it, has expressed in a form more simple and yet more vivid than these words of John, the new idea of God which dwelt in Him. The name Father for God was not indeed completely unknown either to heathendom or Judaism. The Homeric Greeks even prayed to Father Zeus, and the Abba, that is, Father, seems to have been not unusual in the Jewish prayers of Jesus' day.<sup>2</sup> But

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Weiss, *N. T. Theology*, vol. i. p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> The old Christian cry, Abba (Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 6), probably originated with Jesus. Cf. Mark xiv. 36. If it appears at the same time in old Jewish prayers, it may be asked whether its origin in these is not due—as so many old Rabbinic sayings suggest—solely to the desire not to lag behind Christian ideas and modes of expression.

the Greeks, in doing so, thought only of the author and preserver of nature, and the Jews of the covenant God of the Old Testament, who had, as it were, adopted Israel as His son, and made him His firstborn among the nations (Ex. iv. 22; Hos. xi. 1). Accordingly, the few passages in which the Old Testament speaks of God as Father, even in such pre-eminently fervent words of prophecy as Isa. lxiii. 16, Jer. xxxi. 20, refer not so much to a personal relation of God to the individual, as His gracious relation to the nation as such. The name "sons of the living God," is only meant by way of promise for the Israelites (Hos. ii. 1). And if pious men after the Exile speak here and there of God as their Father (Mal. ii. 10; Sir. xxiii. 1, 4; Wisd. ii. 16, 18, xiv. 3), they do so, really, only in the sense of Creator and gracious Preserver. Jesus' use of the name Father is related to these Old Testament applications of it, quite in the same way as His idea of divine sonship is related to the Old Testament examples of that sonship. He first stamped the name Father as one proper to God, and at the same time put into it all the fulness of God's revelation dwelling in Himself. In the first place, the name Father on the lips of Jesus is the expression of a purely personal relation that has no equal. "My Father," He says above all (Luke ii. 49; Matt. vii. 21, x. 32, xi. 27, xii. 50, xv. 13, xvi. 17, etc.), and therewith declares that He knows Himself beloved by and familiar with the eternal and holy One, to whom Israel looks up in pious fear, or even with awe and dread, as only a son can be beloved by his father and familiar with him. But then He also gives His followers this feeling and the right of expressing it—not, indeed, to the whole nation,<sup>1</sup> but to those who gather around Him under the standard of the kingdom of God, those whom He calls His brethren and sisters, because they are willing to do the will of His Father in heaven (Mark iii. 5). He speaks to them of God as "your heavenly Father," in the sense of a personal relation also, in which every one of them may severally find

<sup>1</sup> The sayings of Matt. v.-vii. and xxiii., which Cremer, p. 688, adduces in support of the contention that Jesus applied the words "your Father" to the nation also, are, as their tenor proves, addressed rather to the disciples, and only woven up by the evangelist into conjectural or actual popular addresses.

rest in God—"thy Father," it is said to each individual (Matt. vi. 4, 18). And it is, at the same time, manifest that the concept of relation must have as background a concept of nature; God does not become the heavenly Father of the disciples because they have entered into the relation of sons with Him, but it is His fatherliness, His holy love, which draws and places them in the relation of children to Him. "*Οπως γένησθε νιοί τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς*" is significantly said in Matt. v. 45. He is their Father: they have to become correspondingly His sons. And if He has not yet become Father to others, that is due simply to the fact that He has not yet been revealed to them in His fatherliness by the Son (Matt. xi. 27). And so Jesus makes the relation name a character name; He not only says My Father and your Father, but also simply the Father (Matt. xi. 27; Mark xiii. 32, and still more frequently in the Fourth Gospel). The character of God which this fatherliness implies follows of itself. Fatherhood is love, original and underived, anticipating and undeserved, forgiving and educating, communicating and drawing to its heart. Jesus felt, conceived, and revealed God as this love which—itself personal—applies to every child of man. That He really desired to characterise the eternal heart of God in this way as the prototype of the human father's heart, is shown by His own express comparison between the two. Matt. vii. 11: *εἰ οὖν ὑμεῖς, πονηροὶ δυτες, οἴδατε δόματα ἀγαθὰ διδόναι τοῖς τέκνοις ὑμῶν, πόσῳ μᾶλλον ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, δώσει ἀγαθὰ τοῖς αἰτοῦσιν αὐτόν!* If earthly fathers are good, and givers of good things to their children, how much more is the heavenly Father, who just as the heavenly Father is raised above all the limitations and defects of earth, and is the *ἀγαθός* simply, the morally perfect, in contrast with those *πονηροῖς*—morally imperfect men!

### § 3. THE *εἰς ἀγαθός* AND *τέλειος*

Jesus has also cleared that idea of God which follows from the name Father by two further important declarations. The first is the saying addressed to the rich young man alluded to above: *τί με λέγεις ἀγαθόν; οὐδεὶς ἀγαθός, εἰ μὴ*

*εἰς, ὁ θεός* (Mark x. 18; Luke xviii. 19). The point in question, as already stated, is the concept good, with which the young man is so indiscriminately lavish. Jesus means to say that in the highest absolute sense it applies to God only. Though He also recognises elsewhere a distinction between good and evil men (*e.g.* Matt. xii. 35), yet in contrast with God even the good are *πονηροί* (Matt. vii. 11). He Himself has nothing of the nature of evil to confess, yet even He is subject to a moral development, and is still exposed to temptation. But God alone is good, according to His nature. It is His nature to be good, so that He in no sense needs first to become perfectly good by the conquering of any assailing evil. He cannot be tempted of evil, and is, on that account, the source of every good and perfect gift, the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning (Jas. i. 17). God therefore in the teaching of Jesus is the ethically absolute, ethically perfect Being. It follows, however, not only from the concept *ἀγαθός* (*cf.* Matt. xx. 15), but is also expressly taught in the other passage which we have in view, that to Him ethical perfection is perfect love, absolute goodness of heart. It is said in the passage already alluded to, Matt. v. 45, 48: *ἀγαπᾶτε τοὺς ἔχθρους ὑμῶν, ὅπως γένησθε σινοὶ τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς· διὰ τὸν ἥλιον αὐτοῦ ἀνατέλλεται ἐπὶ πονηροὺς καὶ ἀγαθοὺς, καὶ βρέχει ἐπὶ δικαίους καὶ ἀδίκους.* "Εσεσθε οὖν ὑμεῖς τέλειοι, ὡς ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐρανίος τέλειός ἐστιν." Jesus means to say that to love our enemies is the crown of *τελειότης*, moral perfection, for it is the seal of a goodness of heart which no opposing evil can disconcert. In it, above all, man may become like God, a son, that is, an image of God. For God is the prototype of goodness; no evil or disobedience of man restrains Him from being good to all, and doing to them all the good they are willing to accept. His natural favours are mentioned just because they, as distinguished from His spiritual gifts of grace, need no special susceptibility, and can be shown equally to the evil and the good. The perfection of God, as the closing words declare, consists in this infinite imperturbable goodness of heart.<sup>1</sup> Jesus therefore describes

<sup>1</sup> Luke vi. 35, 36, in putting goodness and mercy instead of perfection, does indeed contract, but has not incorrectly paraphrased the notion.

the God whom He calls Father as the simply good, morally perfect Being, as the ethically absolute and absolutely ethical, that is, holy Love. The superiority of this idea of God to that of the Old Testament is manifest. There the ethical idea of God is still in conflict with the idea of mere absolute power, autocratic caprice. Nay, it is not even completely free from the husks of physical representations, so that the moral requirements of God still remain mixed with sensuous ritual requirements, and still less is this ethical idea of God carried beyond the mere negative character of holiness to the positive perfection of simple goodness or love. Among so many shadows of hatred and revenge belonging to God's government, how could it become manifest that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all? No doubt the love and goodness, the grace and mercy, of God are praised in the Old Testament, but they are extolled as particular and limited attributes, alongside of others of a different character—not as His inmost and entire being. Jesus from the depths of His own heart, burning with holy love, first brought to light the peculiar Christian idea of God such as is known to no other religion, the unsurpassable idea of holy love, and at the same time He expressed this highest conceivable idea of God in the simplest and sweetest words, in the name heavenly Father.

#### § 4. HEAVEN AND EARTH

This idea of God already involves the conception of another existence, an existence which can be the object of eternal goodness and love, that is, the world. And therefore this is the place to fix our attention on the manner in which, in the light of His idea of God and on the basis of the Old Testament, Jesus formed His general view of the world. The name Father in heaven, or heavenly Father, immediately reminds us that in the view of Jesus the universe is divided into two kingdoms, heaven and earth. I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth," He says (Matt. xi. 25), when solemnly discussing the great purpose of God's love. But He does not regard heaven and earth as two localities, in one of which God has His dwelling-place but not in the other. "Heaven is His throne and earth is His footstool."

He exclaims (Matt. v. 35), in a sublime metaphor of Isaiah (lxvi. 1), just in order to express that both heaven and earth belong to His God. Nevertheless, this very saying indicates a different relation of God to heaven and to earth. Heaven is the seat of the divine majesty, the kingdom of the divine glory in all its fulness, and the home of the eternal blessings above sense, from which everything divine on earth springs, and to which it points. From heaven, according to Mark xi. 30, was the baptism of John, that is, it was a historical phenomenon whose origin was divine. Against heaven the prodigal son sinned (Luke xv. 18); that is, not merely against his earthly father, but also against God and His holy order. In heaven is laid up the treasure or reward which is obtained by a doing or enduring of the will of God on earth (Matt. v. 12, xix. 21; Luke xii. 33). From heaven, where it is prepared from the beginning of the world (Matt. xxv. 34), comes down to earth the kingdom of God, as a kingdom of heaven (Matt. iv. 17). In heaven—according to the third petition of the Lord's Prayer—the will of God is done ideally and naturally, for the like doing of which on earth we are to pray. The meaning of Jesus as to the idea and relation of heaven and earth is clear enough from all these sayings. Heaven, as contrasted with earth, is the ideal world throned above the world of human life in which the will of God is self-evident, while on earth it has first to be realised. Of course this ideal world is conceived as in the highest degree real. The world of the spiritual and eternal blessings is no phantom. It is the most real and actual of all, much more so than the world of sense. It is the home and hearth and goal of all true life on earth. But its reality is of a different kind from that of earth. This latter, in contrast with heaven, is the region of a moral growth through history, that is, of imperfection and gradual unfolding, of creaturely freedom and sin. But as the good, outside of God's self-existence, can only realise itself in the way of moral growth, of freedom and history, the rich heaven is indeed the home, but the poor earth is the object of the divine thoughts of love. The kingdom of heaven comes down from heaven to earth, in order to find here its realisation in an element which is free in relation to God, and consequently capable of a free surrender to Him.

### § 5. ANGELS

We do not mean by the above statements that Jesus gave up, as an idea, the local conception of heaven which was presented to Him from childhood, and consciously treated it as a mere poetic symbol. In all cosmic matters to which His teaching refers, He was content to use the forms of conception furnished to Him in the Old Testament and by His people and time, as He did not consider it His calling to be a critic in matters of worldly knowledge, and so become a scientific reformer. But He put life into these forms, with the purest religious ideas, and so spiritualised them to that religious view which even we cannot do without, however much we may feel its figurative character. This is a point from which we have to consider every part of Jesus' view of the world, and first of all, from it we must consider His view of the angels, which belongs directly to His idea and representation of heaven. The Old Testament conception had imagined heaven, the home of God, as peopled with a host of ministering spirits, who, as pure emanations of the divine glory, as organs of the God who ruled the world, were therefore designated angels, that is, messengers of God. The later Judaism in its efforts to keep God and the world as far apart as possible, and to separate the Eternal from all contact with the finite, had more and more imagined these emanations and messengers of the living God as personal intermediate beings, who had to manage the intercourse of God with the world, and of whose names, ranks, good and evil doings, there were many fables. The immediate relation to the world in which Jesus viewed His heavenly Father had no room for such personal intermediate beings, and so in His lively sense of God He went past these angel tales of His contemporaries to the simple sensuous representations of the Old Testament. The angels of God, in whose presence there is joy over one sinner who repenteth (Luke xv. 10), or before whom the Son of Man will confess those who have confessed Him before men (Luke xii. 8), are a kind of poetic paraphrase for God Himself, to whom in both cases the words properly refer (cf. the parallel passage Matt. x. 32). They are the graphic representation of the higher world, to the citizenship

of which the penitent returns, and in which the faithful confessor receives his crown. The holy angels of the Son of Man, with whom He will come again in His glory (Matt. xvi. 27, xxv. 31), are the rays of divine majesty which is then to surround Him with splendour; they are the divine powers with which He is to awaken the dead, to dissolve the present order of the world, and set up a new and higher order. And the twelve legions of angels for which the oppressed Messiah could pray to His Father (Matt. xxvi. 53), are the expression of the divine miraculous powers—alluding to the weak human powers of the twelve disciples—which He could call up against His enemies. The most remarkable passage is Matt. xviii. 10 : ὄρατε μὴ καταφρονήσητε ἐνὸς τῶν μικρῶν τούτων λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν, δτι οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτῶν ἐν οὐρανοῖς διὰ παντὸς βλέπουσιν τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ πατρός μου τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς; and it is the very passage which we can least of all take in prosaic literalness. According to it, every one, even the least of the children of men,—for it is of the least and not of children that the passage speaks,—has his guardian angel, who at all times has access to the heavenly Father, viz. to complain to Him of the offences that are given to His protégé on earth (ver. 6). As God, according to Jesus, knows what happens to each of His human children without needing to be told (cf. Matt. vi. 8), in what other way can we conceive this entirely poetical passage, than that in every child of man a peculiar thought of God has to be realised, which stands over his history like a genius, or guardian spirit, and which God at all times remembers, so that everything which opposes its realisation on earth comes before Him as a complaint? In all these cases it is clear that Jesus represents the angels as persons indeed, but manifestly treats them in a symbolical poetic way; He did not set up any doctrine about angels, but simply used the conception as a means of presenting ideas of another kind. The notion of angels remains thus hovering between personality and personification; and that the latter alone is its kernel, is clear from the fact that Jesus treats the angels as powers of God, but nowhere as aims and ends of God, which alone would force us in earnest to think of their personality. The fatherly relation of God is nowhere applied to the angels, the passage

last quoted showing rather that the aims of God are confined to the children of men, and the angels (quite in the sense of Heb. i. 14) are only means to the ends of the divine thought of love.

i.e. there are no real "angels".

### § 6. MAN

Thus heaven points to earth and angels to men as the proper place for the realising of the thoughts of God. The place of creaturely freedom, on whose soil the good alone can realise itself outside of God, is, as we have said, the earth on which, according to the third petition of the Lord's Prayer, the will of God is not done as in heaven of itself, but men must pray that it be so done. And the possessor of that creaturely freedom is man, the citizen of both worlds, who though he has his roots in the earth, the world of nature, is planned and destined for heaven, the eternal world of spirit. To him and not to the angels, the Lord of heaven and earth desires to be a Father, and desires that man should be His son, the heir of the kingdom of heaven. With the whole of the Scriptures Jesus distinguishes in human nature two factors, one above sense with affinities for God, and one sensuous with affinities for nature. When these two factors are conceived in their differences and contrasts, they are called flesh and spirit—as in the saying (Matt. xxvi. 41), the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. When—as is the rule—they are conceived in their mutual relation and sphere of action, they are called soul and body (*e.g.* Matt. x. 28). In virtue of this soul, which is akin to spirit, and for that reason to God, man is raised above all other creatures and made the special object of the divine love and care. "Fear not, ye are better than many sparrows," cries Jesus to His disciples, in that saying concerning the divine care, without which not even a sparrow falls to the ground (Matt. x. 31; cf. also Matt. xii. 12). Jesus points here to the character of man as personal, to his nature as fashioned by God for His eternal purpose, and destined for a moral and spiritual perfection. Its infinite worth, together with all the responsibility that lies in that, is made prominent in the sublime saying: "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark viii. 36; Matt. xvi. 26).

The whole world, the sum total of natural things and finite good, does not outweigh the human soul, the human personality, which is planned for and called to the infinite. And this impress which raises man above all finite creatures, and places him by the side of the eternal Father, is in the teaching of Jesus the property of every child of man, even the least and last. As the true shepherd does not forget the one lost lamb of his whole flock, so the love of God is not directed to humanity as a whole, but to every individual soul, that it may not be deprived of its eternal destiny. "It is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish" (Matt. xviii. 14). To Jesus this spiritual, moral nature of the human soul, its personality, involves, as a matter of course, its capacity for immortality. The body may be killed, and must some day yield to death, but the soul does not die—no human power can kill it (Matt. x. 29). When the body breaks up in death, angels then bear upwards the soul of the pious into another world, the world in which he trusted (Luke xvi. 22). In union with God, who is not a God of the dead but of the living, even those long dead, like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, have immortal life (Mark xii. 26, 27; Matt. xxii. 32; Luke xx. 38). This does not mean, however, that every one capable of such a life is intended for it, is certain of it. The soul may, as the two sayings adduced above remind us, suffer loss, may even be lost, if instead of surrendering itself to the supersensuous and eternal it loses itself in the vain and empty. The same Father in heaven who draws Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to His heart, and willeth not that even the least should be lost, may then be in the position to destroy both soul and body in hell (Matt. x. 29). The notion of a Sheol held by His people, a Hades or kingdom of the dead which encloses in regions far apart a Paradise and a Gehenna, a place of comfort and a place of torment (cf. Luke xxiii. 43; Matt. v. 22), was recognised by Jesus in His Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke xvi. 19–31) as essentially true. He thereby taught that behind the death of the body there awaits the soul either a glorious ascent or a sad descent, according as here on earth it has entered into the spirit of a higher dwelling-place, or wasted its earthly life in vanities.

### § 7. SIN

The destination of man for immortality, however, is opposed on earth by sin. Jesus, as the preacher of His gospel should take note, has spoken little of sin in general, and has proposed no doctrine of it, least of all a doctrine of its origin; He presupposed it as a fact, and showed its evil nature by the penalties He attached to it. In its inmost nature He regards it as an apostasy of the soul from the living God. The heart of man, in which, after the manner of the Bible, He sees the single focus of our inner life, the central seat of feeling, thought, and will (cf. Matt. xii. 34, xv. 19),—the heart is to Him for the moral man what the eye is for the sentient, the organ of light. If it is single,—that is, sincere and steadfastly directed to the eternal good, to God and His will, the heavenly light,—the revelation of God then streams into it, and the whole moral man, with his powers and gifts, moves in the element of light—that is, of the right, the good, the divine. But if the inner eye is distorted or diseased, then the light cannot stream into it, and then the man is in darkness, and lives and moves entirely in the darkness (Matt. vi. 22, 23; Luke xi. 34–36). But what can determine the inner eye to become thus evil? Above all, the so-called earthly goods, in the narrower sense, are the things that blind it. Mammon, that is, wealth, which has become a false god, an idol, has a special power of withdrawing man from a steadfast surrender of the heart to God. This is the constant difficulty which makes it harder for rich men than for others to enter into the kingdom of God (Mark x. 24, 25; Matt. xix. 23, 24). In spite of mammon, a man probably thinks that he can adhere to God; he desires to serve two masters, God and mammon. But the latter, like the former, claims the whole heart and mind with all their powers, and the man is unawares brought to despise and neglect the good Master, while holding to and obeying the evil (Matt. vi. 24; Luke xvi. 13). But that is only an outstanding example of how a man is drawn away from God. The possibility and temptation thereto lies entirely in his twofold nature, his twofold relation to God and the world. “The spirit is willing,” cries Jesus to His disciples (Matt. xxvi. 41), “but the flesh is

weak." The spirit is willing to watch and pray and attend to that which keeps us in communion with God, but the flesh, our sensuous nature, is the weak side of the fortress on which the attractions and terrors of the sensuous world make their onset, and easily overwhelm the heart. The possibility of sin is thus explained; but this possibility has become a universal reality, and Jesus reckons with this fact without venturing on its explanation. Without hesitation He presupposes the universality of sin. He says of His hearers (Matt. vii. 11), as something self-evident, "Ye who are evil." The call to repentance, *μετανοεῖτε*, is addressed without reservation to all, and in the Lord's Prayer the need of forgiveness is in the same way presupposed on the part of all, even of a Peter and a John. Moreover, His observation does not stop at individual errors and faults, though these individual offences are also duly considered in the fifth petition. From evil deeds the penetrating look of Jesus goes back to the evil word and the evil thought (Matt. v. 22), and again from all these particular phenomena to the fundamental tendency of the mind, to the tree which bears such fruits, to the treasure of the heart, the inner condition and store which has been formed by the totality of the individual moral acts, and is now the source of further individual action in word or work (Matt. xii. 32-35). Hence Jesus recognises in man a development of sin. First, the simple movement of the heart to some more venial, or more heinous, outbreak in word and then in deed (Matt. v. 22). And then the further deeper stage of increasing resistance and contradiction to the divine admonition, the passage from simple transgression to blasphemy, and from the reviling of the Son of Man, who may easily be mistaken, to blaspheming the Holy Spirit, who inwardly attests Himself, and so is not to be mistaken (Mark iii. 28, 29; Matt. xii. 31, 32). And in this last and uttermost possibility, as it excludes further knowledge, excludes conversion, and with conversion forgiveness, He sees the irrevocable ruin of the inner man. In contrast with this deep, penetrating judgment of sin, the moderate way in which this judgment goes to work is the more remarkable. In the most impartial way Jesus recognises the moral distinctions among sinful men; not merely

the great distinctions in outward civil righteousness, which He does indeed recognise in their full measure of value in His Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican (Luke xv. 1–32, xviii. 10), and in His not merely ironical contrasting of righteous and sinner (Matt. ix. 13). He even attributes truly good, really divine features to the human heart, and finds more of them in one than in another. He sets up a Samaritan, a half-heathen, as a model of love for our neighbour (Luke x. 23–37). He perceives in children a simplicity and meekness, a confidingness, which gives them an advantage in gaining the kingdom of heaven (Mark x. 14; Matt. xviii. 3). He distinguishes—just in reference to the treasure of the heart—evil men and good men (Matt. xii. 35). Amongst His people He knows not only some who are poor in spirit and hungering for righteousness, but some also who are merciful, peacemakers, pure in heart, and suffering for righteousness' sake (Matt. v. 1–10). And the poor Lazarus, the sufferer who trusts in God, goes to the bosom of Abraham without belonging to the New Testament kingdom of God (Luke xvi. 19). Only those who have no need of the *μετάνοια*, conversion from the bottom of the heart, are unknown to Him, or rather are known only in the ironical sense of Matt. ix. 13 and Luke xv. 7,—as righteous according to human notions, who regard themselves therefore as righteous also according to the divine idea. Even the best and most pious men in Israel, His chosen disciples, have to be converted and become as little children in order to enter into the kingdom of God (Matt. xviii. 3). And it is to them directly, to Peter chiefly, that He addresses the Parable of the Ten Thousand Pounds of arrears, that is, of the infinity of man's obligations to God (Matt. xviii. 23–35). For everything that is not perfect love of God, and does not spring from perfect love of God, is ultimately sin ; and with the knowledge of God and of His holy will, the feeling of guilt, the more pious a man is, grows to overwhelming strength. Finally, we must note that all these distinctions of the sinful condition, and this whole infinity of the awakened sense of guilt, does not call in question the capacity of any sinner to repent—except it be the (hypothetic) sinner against the Holy Ghost. The universal call to repentance, *μετανοεῖτε*, presupposes an unlost

moral freedom in every one. The exhortation, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate" (Matt. vii. 13), is addressed to all, and therefore is regarded as possible for all; and in Matt. xxiii. 37 it is expressly declared that Jerusalem of her own free will had decided to reject the hand of deliverance stretched out to her.

### § 8. SATAN

But evil exists not only as an ungodly bias of the human heart, and as an aggregate of evidences of that bias—it is a world-ruling principle, which meets us in history as well as in nature. In history, there rules at all times a spirit of seduction and deceit which goes far beyond the perverted self-determination of the individual, and surrounds him as a power of temptation. And in nature there rules, in spite of the beneficent and kindly divine order, a power of disorder and destruction which overwhelms humanity with disease and misery. There can be no doubt that Jesus does not trace back to God natural evil in its manifold forms in the same way as He does with natural beneficence, the rising sun, and fruit-bringing rain (Matt. v. 45). He frankly recognised it as a contradiction of the creative thoughts and arrangements of the good God. He considers it to be the task of the kingdom of God to overcome all the manifold phenomena of misery in nature, as well as those of moral perversity (Matt. xi. 2–6, xii. 28). For both of these God-opposed kingdoms, in human life and in nature, are unmistakably united. For natural evil tempts to moral evil, to apostasy from God, and, on the other hand, sin brings disorder and misery into the world. It is a uniform kingdom of evil, which, in the world of nature and of history, opposes itself to the good which God has willed and ordained. And therefore it is only the expression of a profoundly true observation of the world when Jesus comprehends both spiritual and natural evil in the enigmatic name Satan, which was presented to him by the Old Testament Scriptures. The original idea of the Accuser (viz. of man to God, cf. Job ii. 1; Zech. iii. 1; Rev. xii. 10) was already extended in the Old Testament to that of the Adversary, the Evil One (*ὁ πονηρός*, Matt. xiii. 38), the

Seducer and Destroyer, and in this form of it Jesus takes up the notion which had sprung from the Old Testament feeling of the contradiction between God's idea and the actual condition of the world. In the narrative of the Temptation (Matt. iv., Luke iv.), which is probably based on some pictorial narrative of Jesus,<sup>1</sup> Satan appears as a tempter to evil, a seductive spirit of the world and of the age. He appears in the same sense in the exposition of some of the parables (Matt. xiii. 19, 38; Luke viii. 12), and in the words of warning to Peter before the denial (Luke xxii. 31: ἴδοὺ ὁ Σατανᾶς ἐξηγγίσατο ὑμᾶς, τοῦ σινάσαι ὑμᾶς ὡς τὸν σῖτον). He appears as Prince of Evil, above all, in the view of the possessed, that is, those disordered in mind and nerves,<sup>2</sup> who are designated as his spoil (Mark iii. 27; Matt. xii. 29; Luke xi. 22). But Jesus also seems to trace back simple bodily sickness to Satan, therein following the representation of the Book of Job. In Luke xvi. 16, He says of the woman who had been bowed together for many years, that Satan had bound her with a fetter which He must loose. Did Jesus think of Satan as a person? It is with this question very much as in the case of the angels. The form of representation is undoubtedly personifying, but all the passages are poetic in style. The narrative of the Temptation, in its biographical kernel, does not lead us to think of a personal Satan, but rather of seductive expectations of the people and the age which were traced back to Satan—that is, were characterised as opposed to God, and as of the nature of temptation. The expressions, Luke xiii. 16, xxii. 31, go back upon the undeniably poetic representations of the Book of Job, in whose style they remain, and the Satan who snatches from the heart the word sown, or sows tares among the wheat of the Son of Man (Matt. xiii. 19, 38), is also simply the impersonal spirit of the world, which can creep into the human heart and into the community of God. The remarkable words, Luke x. 18: "I saw Satan fall as lightning from heaven," express, in an image reminding us of Isa. xiv. 12, the overthrow which the appearance of the kingdom of God has prepared for the power of evil that has hitherto ruled the world (cf. Rev. xii. 9). It

<sup>1</sup> Cf. my *Leben Jesu*, Bd. i. p. 228.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 300.

is certain that Jesus did not recognise as personal devils the demons in whom the popular Jewish belief saw personal angels of Satan (cf. Matt. xxv. 41; 2 Cor. xii. 7). For in Mark iii. 26, Matt. xii. 26, He translates the casting out of demons by Beelzebub into Satan is being divided and casting out himself.<sup>1</sup> It is further certain that Jesus set up no theory about Satan, and in no way derived or explained him as perhaps a fallen archangel; that He does not touch the riddle which is presented in the notion of a personal and radically evil being, especially within the biblical belief in God. What He means by the name Satan is simply that evil, in the world of nature and of history, is an actual, uniform, and fearful power, and that this power is in no way to be traced back to God, but is the element in the world which apes God, and is opposed to God—a thought which, as it produced the idea of Satan in the Old Testament, must even to-day be recognised by every earnest ethical and religious thinker.

#### § 9. THE INNER RELATION OF GOD TO THE WORLD

What, then, is the relation of God to this world, in which what is opposed to Him, that is, moral evil, thus exists, nay is dominant? It is just what we would expect from His heavenly fatherliness, from the idea of holy love. He is related to the world so closely, and is as present and operative in it as He can be without denying His absolute goodness, His holy perfection, and without interfering with the fundamental condition of all development of good in the world, the freedom of the creature. Though the world in its present condition, as *ai&on; oivros* (Luke xvi. 8), is far from being God's kingdom, it yet remains His work and workshop. If the Judaism of that time separated God and the world from each other almost deistically, if Sadduceeism viewed the earth as the mere playground of human caprice, and Pharisaism but feebly raised itself above this by the assumption of a divine fate, or law of destiny,<sup>2</sup> Jesus, on the other hand, conceives the relation of His Father to the world as one

<sup>1</sup> Cf. my *Leben Jesu*, i. p. 303.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Josephus, *Antiq.* xviii. 3. 1, xiii. 5. 9.

thoroughly instinct with life; the Father is to Him really what He calls Him in Matt. xi. 25, Lord of heaven and earth. First, He treats the thought of God as Creator seriously. Everything created by God is in itself innocent and pure. With absolute consistency He disclaims, in doctrine and example, the ascetic anxiety and embarrassment in the use of things natural, which dualistic influences at that time were forcing even into Judaism (cf. Matt. xi. 19, xv. 11). And God has by no means withdrawn Himself from the world once created. It is He who makes His sun to rise, and the fertilising rain to fall, who feeds the fowls of the heavens, and clothes the lilies of the field fairer than Solomon in all his glory (Matt. v. 45, vi. 26). Jesus certainly does not, as we have seen, trace back to His heavenly Father the evil and pernicious in nature, as He does the beautiful and salutary; but even with regard to the evil He thinks of Him as the Almighty Ruler of the world, without whose will nothing, not even the smallest event, can take place. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matt. x. 29). That is, not a hair will be injured without the will of your Father in heaven. The temptations also which lie in the path of the children of men do not indeed proceed from God, but yet are somehow in His hand. He can lead into temptation; He can also lead us not into temptation, as is attested by the sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer. He can also shorten temptations, lest they should overcome His elect (Matt. xxiv. 22). In like manner, God is in no way prevented by the permanence of nature from hearing prayer or working miracles. Though prayer, in the sense of Jesus, as the Lord's Prayer shows, is not in the first instance directed to things earthly and finite, yet these are not excluded from it. Of course the common saying: "All things are possible with God" (Mark x. 27), admits of the exception, which is self-evident and expressly recognised by Jesus in Gethsemane, that whatever contradicts His higher aims, the purpose of His eternal wisdom and love, is not possible with God. But that does not hinder God from being at all times able and willing to give good gifts to His praying children, in virtue of the

mutual relation which exists between fatherly love and childlike trust (Matt. vii. 7-11; Mark xi. 23, 24). In particular, He has given His Son power to remove at times the natural trouble which harasses man, as a sign of the near approach of God's kingdom (Matt. xi. 4, xii. 28), and this power is also to be transferred to those who, as His messengers, are to carry the glad news to all the world (Matt. x. 8). But, finally, the heavenly Father is not satisfied with keeping the world mainly as it is, and cheering it with an abundance of helps and favours. He guides the whole world onwards towards an ideal goal of perfection. Behind the dark night of the *aiών οὐτος*, the present imperfect and evil condition of the world, shines the dawn of an *aiών μέλλων*, in which a new, perfect, and imperishable order of the world will appear, a *παλιγγενεσία* of heaven and earth which will abolish the contrast of the two in a completed kingdom of God (Matt. xix. 28; Luke xx. 34-36).

#### § 10. THE DIVINE RIGHTEOUSNESS

As to the relation of God to sinful man in particular, it may be said that in the teaching of Jesus it is righteousness and mercy or grace going hand in hand. Without expressing the idea of the divine righteousness in this sense, Jesus prefers to present the divine procedure as a *suum cuique*, an appointing of fit recompenses. "He who exalteth himself shall be abased; and he who humbleth himself will be exalted" (Luke xviii. 14). "To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath" (Mark iv. 25; Matt. xxv. 29). "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive your trespasses; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. vi. 14, 15). But that is not the *suum cuique* of the cold rule of justice; the rule of justice is never generous, forgiving, loving. It is the righteousness of holy love which is here described,—a righteousness which is merciful towards the poor because he is poor, which recognises in every susceptibility and turning towards itself a claim on its

favour, and only denies itself in judgment to the unsusceptible and obdurate. This is the point from which alone we can understand Jesus' conception of God's punishments and rewards. The love of God is to Him as an all-surrounding atmosphere, which penetrates wherever it can find an entrance, creating and exalting life wherever it comes. The praying publican has only to open his guilt-burdened heart in a "God be merciful to me a sinner," and grace and forgiveness enter into it. But the human heart in its selfishness and sin stops all openings against this atmosphere, and so keeps life out and death in. And the wrath of God, His penalties and judgments, mean simply His denying Himself to those who deny themselves to Him, and leaving them to the death and self-condemnation which necessarily rule where access to the true eternal life is closed. Accordingly, in the holy order of the world all evil punishes and condemns itself, and yet only the absolute evil, the completed break with eternal love, falls under the irrevocable final judgment. An immeasurable series of relative judgments proceeds throughout this world, in which everything is intended for developing to a final goal, for growing towards a day of harvest, and these are at length summed up just as in the history of Israël the sentences are summed up in the approaching destruction of Jerusalem (Matt. xxiii. 35). And yet through all these judgments again runs an unexhausted goodness, a mercy that never grows weary so long as there is any possibility of deliverance. God is righteous, and in this righteousness just, good, and merciful towards His adversaries. He gives them what they will take from Him, His rain and His sunshine (Matt. v. 45). He also distinguishes between weakness and wickedness, between sins of ignorance and sins of wilfulness. "The servant who knew his lord's will and did it not shall be beaten with many stripes; but he who knew it not and hath done what is worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes," an idea from which Jesus infers a specially mild judgment of God about the heathen. "If such deeds (of revelation) had been done in Sidon or even in Sodom, they had repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes; but it will be more tolerable for Sidon and Sodom in the day of judgment than for you" (Matt. xi. 20-24). Most remarkable is that

passage which speaks of the pardonableness of all sin except the sin against the Holy Ghost (Mark iii. 28 ; Matt. xii. 31 f.; Luke xii. 10). It not only opens up the possibility of sin being forgiven (and therefore also of conversion) in the world to come, but contains the idea that every sin which admits of fuller knowledge, and so of conversion, is also capable of forgiveness ; and only that obstinacy is excluded which shuts out both learning and conversion, and even the eternal truth and love inwardly felt and experienced. The same idea of the divine righteousness of love lies at the basis of Jesus' doctrine of reward. The reward of which Jesus mostly speaks (cf. Matt. v. 12, vi. 1-16, x. 41, 42, xx. 1-16), has nothing to do with a legal merit. In the teaching of Jesus there is no such thing in the usual sense of the word as merit in the presence of God ; for when we have done all things which God requires, we have only done what was our duty (Luke xvii. 7-10).<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, when, in Matt. vi. 6, the heavenly Father rewards the prayer which is offered from a sincere heart,—prayer which in no way establishes a claim of right,—it is clear that here again rules the *suum cuique* of merciful love, to which the prayer of poverty is sufficient claim to the communication of love's riches. We shall have to come back in another later connection to this idea of reward, to which an unreasonable objection has sometimes been taken. In its relation to God, it simply means that in all the good he thinks and does man has to do, not with an impotent abstract idea, but with an almighty living reality of good, in which there is reward for all that is thought and done within its sphere. That is the manifest blessing of the Christian faith in God, that with every act in which we surrender ourselves to the eternal holy love, and for it sacrifice our temporal welfare and selfish nature, we are enriched by gaining "a treasure in the heavens" (Matt. xix. 21).

#### § 11. THE GRACE AND MERCY OF GOD

If Jesus conceives the righteousness of God as merciful and gracious, so, on the other hand, He regards grace and

<sup>1</sup> The unprofitable servant is he who brings to his lord no more than he costs him for his daily bread.

mercy as righteous, that is, morally conditioned.<sup>1</sup> That at once appears in the most obvious expression of God's pitying, fatherly love towards sinful man, the forgiveness of sin. Sin in relation to the eternal rights of God is arrears of payment due. It is debt, and this debt cannot be discharged by any human performance, but can only be cancelled by divine forgiveness. Jesus proclaims this forgiveness richly, portrays it in the most moving pictures, such as the Parable of the Prodigal Son, that no sum, though it were ten thousand talents (Matt. xviii. 24), is too great for it to cancel. But it is throughout morally conditioned, and that not merely by the preceding, but also by the succeeding conduct of the man. Thus, Jesus in the Lord's Prayer teaches His disciples to pray for the forgiveness of their debts, but at the same time, that they must show God's forgiveness to their debtors, for God forgives only on this presupposition; and where this does not take place, the remission of debt already made is, according to the Parable of the Unfaithful Steward, revoked, and the divine mercy gives place to righteous judicial wrath (Matt. xviii. 23-35). But the connection between mercy and righteousness lies still deeper, and is a more radical one. Mere forgiveness is not the one entire work of grace. The grace of God has a more comprehensive aim, within which forgiveness is only one element, a means to an end—the aim of delivering the lost (Luke xv., xix. 10). That the sinner become a new man, that he be converted and live, is the aim of the divine grace (Matt. xviii. 12-14); and when this aim is attained in a man, when—in the language of the parable—the lost lamb is found, God can righteously forgive, for the lost is now found. The man has been converted, has broken with sin, and therefore the heavenly Father can pass over the sins of the past, just as the father in the parable makes no more mention of his son's way of death, from the moment when he sees that the lost is found, the dead alive. This relation of

<sup>1</sup> The idea of divine grace is just as little formally present in the synoptic teaching of Jesus as that of the divine righteousness, but both ideas are really all the more richly present. The grace of God is presented by Jesus chiefly under the image of compassionate love, of mercy (cf. Matt. xviii. 27; Luke xv. 20), but it lies at the basis of the whole message of the kingdom of heaven coming near to sinners.

affinity between grace and righteousness, righteousness and mercy, in the view of Jesus, corrects an error into which the doctrinal development of the Church has fallen, and which, up to this moment, throws a painful shadow on the understanding of the gospel. By detaching both ideas, that of righteousness and that of grace, from their root, the idea of holy love, and by conceiving righteousness in a juristic legal sense and grace in an antinomian sense, a contradiction arose between the two attributes in God, which had to be reconciled by a historical fact, by the sacrifice on Golgotha. The grace and mercy of God should urge to the pardon of the sinner, the forgiveness of sin. Yet these conflict with the righteousness of God in itself, and can therefore take place only on condition of an atonement satisfying the claims of righteousness. This theory cannot appeal with reason even to the Old Testament, to say nothing of the teaching of Jesus. Though the forgiveness of sin appears in the Mosaic law to be, in certain circumstances, conditioned by a sacrifice, yet the teaching of the psalms and prophets already sets aside the idea that God has not inner freedom to remit debt without getting payment of it in some other way. The sacrifices with which God is well pleased are a broken and a contrite spirit, that is, a penitent heart. Wherever that is, there is forgiveness (Ps. cxxx. 4, 7) without any other satisfaction. The teaching of Jesus goes further on this track. He shows His Father's heart not narrower, but still wider than in the Old Testament; He teaches that God not only forgives the man who turns to Him without more ado, but that He wishes to convert even the unconverted, in order to be able to forgive them—that He seeks the lost until He finds it. In the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, the penitent invokes the grace of God, and without any reservation or reference to a future sacrifice, it is said, "he went down to his house justified" (Luke xviii. 14). In the Parable of the Unfaithful Steward the relation of God to the sinner is compared with the position of a king to whom one of his servants owed ten thousand talents; the servant prays for mercy, and his lord sets him free, and remits the debt, without any mention of a vicarious payment (Matt. viii. 23). The prodigal son trusts to an unbroken love and goodness of his father, and finds it

without any innocent brother having to make amends for the guilty. The father, like a true father, receives him to favour, and restores him to all his filial rights. How should he not? He has the best satisfaction he could desire: "This my son was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found"; he has begun a new life, and will continue it. Jesus never taught otherwise, when speaking of divine mercy or forgiveness of sin. He never represented His Father's heart as being inwardly hindered in freely forgiving. We shall show in its proper place that even that which He afterwards said of a ransom for many, of a relation of His death to the forgiveness of sins, neither adds nor takes anything from this. The righteousness and grace of God appear apart in His teaching, only in so far as from the former are deduced essential holy requirements of God with which His blessed fellowship is connected, from the latter gracious grants, which make the fulfilment of those requirements possible to man—law and gospel. But both holy requirement and gracious grant flow equally from the idea of the *εἰς ἀγαθός*, from God's essential goodness, in virtue of which He must be the holy original of all actual goodness, as well as the power, rich in love and help, for all growth in goodness. But for human thought and experience, and therefore in the teaching of Jesus, the two sides necessarily appear apart. And therefore we have now to take a closer view of them in succession.

## CHAPTER V

### THE WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

#### § 1. THE CONCEPT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Although the teaching of Jesus is essentially gospel and not law, yet His gospel embodies the law of God. If the God and Father of Jesus Christ is *τέλεος* in the ethical sense (Matt. v. 48), or if the kingdom of heaven is fellowship with Him, then the preaching of the kingdom of heaven must, above all, require the being perfect, as the Father in heaven is perfect, that is,—to use an expression of Jesus Himself,—it is a preaching of the way of righteousness (Matt. xxi. 32).

In point of fact this exacting side of His gospel appears to be more fully and studiously developed in the teaching of Jesus than even the announcement of grace. We have it at once in the *μετανοεῖτε*; then it forms the essential content of the Sermon on the Mount, which plainly, whatever circumstances led to its complete formation, in its main content belongs to the earlier period of Jesus' ministry and His, formally, most developed teaching. We are strictly following the Sermon on the Mount when we comprehend the religious and moral demands of the gospel in the idea of righteousness, for that sermon itself repeatedly comprehends in this Old Testament watchword the claims which the kingdom of God makes on all its citizens (Matt. v. 6, 20, vi. 1, and especially vi. 33). Of course, righteousness is not spoken of here as one particular virtue alongside of others, but as a summary of all that is just before God, which is also the fundamental biblical conception of righteousness. What is just, that is, right (originally straight), is that which corresponds to a standard. The standard here spoken of is God's holy nature and will. He who conforms to that is right in God's sight. In this sense Matt. v. 20, vi. 33 set forth righteousness as the essential aim of the efforts of those who wish to belong to the kingdom of God. "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."<sup>1</sup> The consonance of the *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ*, proposed as the goal of the seeking in the latter passage, with the well-known fundamental conception of the Epistle to the Romans (Rom. i. 17, iii. 21), should not mislead us into the supposition that Jesus had in His mind a righteousness to be bestowed by God, imputed to faith. The *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* has rather the same meaning here as in Jas. i. 20 : *ὅργὴ γὰρ ἀνδρὸς δικαιοσύνην θεοῦ οὐκ ἐργάζεται*, that is, does not what is right in God's sight. The idea of a righteousness to be done is not only verbally in the passage Matt. vi. 1, but runs through the whole Sermon on

<sup>1</sup> This passage, according to the best witnesses, should be read : *ζητεῖτε δὲ πρῶτον τὴν βασιλείαν καὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην αὐτοῦ* (that is, *θεοῦ*). It speaks, therefore, of a righteousness of God, and not, as one often hears, of a righteousness of the kingdom of God.

the Mount. The righteousness which is required in v. 20 for the kingdom of heaven is, according to the whole further course of the chapter, not one to be laid hold of by faith, but one to be acquired by a right doing of the divine commandments, as is abundantly confirmed by the exclusion of the ἐργαζόμενοι τὴν ἀνομίαν in the closing exhortations of the Sermon on the Mount (vii. 16–19, 20, 21, 23, 24). There can be no doubt at all about the fact that Jesus taught a doing of righteousness as the condition of an interest in the future kingdom of God. To the scribe who asked about eternal life He answered : "Do that, and you will live" (Luke x. 28). He referred the rich young man in all earnestness to the ten commandments when he came to Him with the same question (Mark x. 19). He declared those who did the θελήματα of His Father in heaven to be His brothers and sisters (Mark iii. 35). Consequently, this righteousness is that moral condition of man which corresponds to the divine law. It is indispensable to sharing in the future kingdom of heaven, because the full and blessed communion with the holy God cannot be conceived without a character conformed to God. That is pictorially set forth in the Parable of the Marriage of the King's Son. There is a wedding garment, a *habitus* fit for God's presence, without which a man may indeed force his way into the heavenly palace, but cannot take part in the king's marriage feast, and must expect rather to be cast forth from it.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> An interpretation, as persistent as it is baseless, imports into this parable the idea that it was a custom in Israel to present the marriage guests with a festal garment on their entrance to the festal chamber, and that this free gift is to be thought of as despised by that unworthy guest. Thus men arbitrarily introduce Pauline notions into the teaching of Jesus ; but all appeals to Paul cannot subvert the statement of the Saviour : "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father in heaven." That alleged custom cannot be proved archæologically ; and even if it could, the parable would not simply leave a feature on which so much depends to be read between the lines. The teaching of Paul is not contradicted; but the point in question is not how one may obtain possession of the righteousness demanded, but is simply to emphasise the demand for it.

■ § 2. POSITION TOWARDS THE CURRENT TEACHING AND PRACTICE  
OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

The people among whom Jesus appeared had not now for the first time, and as something entirely new, to receive the divine demand for righteousness. Israel had Moses and the prophets (Luke xvi. 29). Through Moses, God had given them His law, which, as a holy order, comprehended and governed the whole life of the people; and through the prophets He had again and again enjoined it on them, and expounded it to them in its depth and inwardness. The scribes and Pharisees, indeed, now sat in Moses' seat, and explained the law to the people in a way that was opposed to the prophetic mode of thought. They externalised the divine commandments, and led the people away from demands on the heart, into an enormous amount of external observances which they wished to draw as "a hedge around the law," as a second law orally transmitted for the securing and carrying out of the first (Matt. xxiii. 2, 4). Jesus therefore had to develop His idea of righteousness so as to make its relation to the idea current among the people understood. What then is the position He takes up towards the doctrine and practice of righteousness that prevail among the people? He declares, above all, that they are insufficient to give one an interest in the kingdom of God. "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v. 20). But He further distinguishes between commandments of God and ordinances of man, between law and prophets on the one hand,<sup>1</sup> and the traditions of the elders on the other, that is, the additional commandments of the scribes and Pharisees. The latter He at once rejects, and, indeed, for the sake of the former.<sup>2</sup> Commandments of men have in His estimation no right and no place beside the commandments of God in

<sup>1</sup> In this comparison the prophets are always (Matt. v. 17, vii. 12; Mark xxiii. 40; Luke xvi. 29) taken into consideration only as the God-sent preachers of righteousness, not as predictors of the Messianic future.

<sup>2</sup> Jesus seems in Matt. xxiii. 3 to recommend the people to observe also the Pharisaic ordinances; but immediately (ver. 4) contradicts that. Either the saying is inaccurately transmitted, or in it He merely wishes to

matters pertaining to God's righteousness. They have a parasitic existence at the cost of the commandments of God, as He proves in a thorough Protestant way to the scribes and Pharisees by reference to the harm they have done in the case of the fourth commandment, and therefore the terse sentence applies to them: "Every plant which My heavenly Father hath not planted must be rooted out" (cf. Mark vii. 1 ff.; Matt. xv. 1 ff.). This presupposes the imperishability and full sufficiency of the divine commandments; and the same is implied in the great fundamental declaration of the Sermon on the Mount: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt. v. 17). To annul, that would be to do away with them, to declare them transitory, and not binding; how could God's perfect messenger do that with what God has revealed respecting His holy will through His former messengers? Yet nothing is more certain than the fact that Jesus was not content with rejecting the Pharisaic and Rabbinic amplifications or expositions of the law, but that He also amended the Mosaic law. In the examples of His doctrine of righteousness that follow in Matthew, He puts His "but I say unto you" twice against the rules hitherto gathered from Moses and his interpreters, and four times against the very words of Moses. And when He explains the words "thou shalt not kill" to the effect that unbrotherly anger is a violation of the sixth commandment; when He goes beyond "thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths," and says "swear not at all"; when He puts in place of "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," the rule, reward not like with like, but evil with good,—He has in all these cases undeniably and consciously annulled the Mosaic letter as such. We have a still more remarkable example of how little He felt Himself bound by that letter: the Mosaic permission of divorce by means of a letter of divorce. He opposes with His own verdict, and refutes the appeal to that positive permission, not by quoting another Mosaic authority, but by the divine idea of marriage, and so puts the ideal law of nature apply the proverb: "Do according to their words, but not according to their works." There can be no doubt about the protesting attitude of Jesus towards the additions of the elders (Mark vii., Matt. xv.).

in the place of the imperfect positive law (Mark x. 2-12; Matt. xix. 3, 9). The principle of this notable way of dealing with the Mosaic law must be contained in the *πληρώσας* (Matt. v. 17). That this word cannot mean here the actual fulfilment of the law nor the fulfilment of the prophets as announcers of future things, follows, as already noted, from the whole connection. For the whole argument that follows does not discuss the actual performance of the law or the realisation of the Messianic predictions, but the development of the Mosaic commandments to the fulness of the divine meaning lying at their basis. But the word cannot signify in one and the same breath an actual and a didactic fulfilling, but only the latter; and this is what Jesus (from ver. 21) does with a whole series of legal precepts. He frees them from the imperfection of the letter and reveals the fulness of the divine intention, and so fulfils them, that is, makes them complete or perfect.<sup>1</sup> Only thus can we explain how Jesus is able to say that He does not annul even the least requirement of the law (Matt. v. 18), though He breaks the letter of the law in so many places. The full development necessarily bursts open the imperfect forms in which the divine will was still enclosed in the law of Moses, just as the fulfilment which the bud gains as a blossom inevitably bursts the sheath in which it was enclosed. But that is no annulment in the sense of ver. 17, no doing away with or rejection of any commandment of God as though it were of no further use. It is to give its right value to the law's deepest meaning.

### § 3. RELATION TO THE RITUAL LAW

If we now endeavour to follow up this principle of Jesus in its applications, we are met by the difficulty of its relation to the ritual part of the law. For although this very aspect of the law was the most prominent in the life of the people,

<sup>1</sup> That Dr. Weiss, in his revision of Meyer's *Commentary on Matthew*, wishes to replace this exposition of the best expositors by that deduced from Rom. xiii. 8, is certainly no improvement. The interpretation of *πληροῦν*, as making full something incomplete, or imperfect, that is, bringing to perfection, is indisputable and frequent. Cf. Matt. xxiii. 32; Mark i. 15; John iii. 29; 2 Cor. x. 6, etc.

Jesus has not expressed Himself in detail about it, nor has He illustrated what He means by fulfilment by any example taken from it. It has been disputed whether Jesus makes any distinction at all between ritual and moral commandments;<sup>1</sup> but neither is that altogether correct, nor does it solve the question how He thought of the fulfilment of ritual law. Certainly our formal distinction of moral and ritual law is not to be sought for in His teaching. But He has distinguished great and little, and even *least* commandments in the law (Matt. xxii. 38, v. 19), and the inward and spiritual character of the greatest commandments allows us to draw a safe inference as to the opposite character of the least. That He regards the ritual commandments as belonging to the latter can scarcely need any proof: "Go and be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift," marks a plain order of rank (Matt. v. 24; cf. Luke xi. 42). Though Jesus, as was natural, lived with His people in observance of their venerable customs and usages, and left His disciples, and much more the people, undisturbed in them (Mark v. 24, i. 44, xiv. 12; Luke xvii. 14), yet there is no mistaking the fact that these forms had no longer any binding power upon His conscience. He has expressed Himself most exhaustively about the Sabbath—always and everywhere in the sense of freedom of conscience. Though the saying: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark ii. 27), allowed this chief outward ordinance a value as a benefit to man, yet the inference that it need not, on that account, bind man to his hurt, is the keynote, and the telling words follow: "The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath" (ver. 28).<sup>2</sup> Other evidences of conscious inner freedom with regard to the outward observances are not wanting. Thus Jesus can accompany the rule of love to one's neighbour (Matt. vii. 12) with "this is the law and the prophets." The ritual com-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Weiss, *N. T. Theol.* i. p. 110 [Trans. T. & T. Clark].

<sup>2</sup> That this does not simply mean, as Weiss will have it, that He has the right to explain the Sabbath commandment, a right which the scribes also had, but that He has the right to put Himself above the Sabbath, and release His disciples from its observance, is sufficiently clear from the context. Jesus does not justify Himself by an exposition of the law, but, as the argument from David's eating of the shewbread proves, He frankly admits the violation of the letter of the law.

mandments are to Him so unessential that He treats them in this expression as though they had no existence. Fasting, which is quietly presupposed in the Sermon on the Mount as a pious exercise of the people (Matt. vi. 16, 18), is expressly left an open question to the disciples to be treated according to their spiritual needs (Mark ii. 18).<sup>1</sup> When the temple tax is demanded of Him, and Peter at once recognises the obligation, Jesus makes clear to him that no king taxes his own son. He bids him pay it, not because He did not know Himself to be inwardly free from such imposts, but only "lest we offend" (give offence to the Jews), (Matt. xvii. 27). When He preaches: "Not that which goeth into a man (food and drink) defileth him" (Mark vii. 15 ; Matt. xv. 11), He is certainly in the first place opposing Pharisaic ordinances. But in so doing, how could Jesus possibly avoid disturbing people with reference to all Mosaic distinctions of clean and unclean food ? Finally, as to the value of sacrificial commandments, we have from the lips of Jesus the great prophetic quotation: "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice" (Hos. vi. 6 ; Matt. ix. 13, xii. 7), a saying which attests not only the clear distinction of the ethical and ritual part of the law in the mind of Jesus, but also that He traced that distinction to the nature of God, and saw that for Him the ethical had importance, but the ritual had none. But how does all this square with the saying (Matt. v. 18) in which Jesus seems to put His general declaration, not to destroy but to fulfil, in the strongest way, so as to secure the preservation of the ritual commandments : "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all

<sup>1</sup> Weiss, *N. T. Theol.* i. p. 111, says, "that from the historical point of view it is inconceivable and incapable of proof that Jesus considered the legal order of life and worship as defective in itself, or ascribed to Himself in principle freedom to deal with it as He pleased." The proof that He really did so has been adduced above. And as to the conceivability, I for my part could not conceive, just from a historical point of view, Jesus as inwardly contented with Mosaic ceremonial, or bound by His own feeling to things which did not follow from the love of God as such. But Weiss appears to me to contradict himself in this matter. For when, as he recognises, Jesus expected the speedy destruction of the temple, and with it of the sacrificial worship, and held the perfected theocracy no longer bound to the Old Testament ritual, He must have seen the latter to be defective, and have ascribed to Himself in principle freedom to deal with it as He pleased.

be fulfilled"?<sup>1</sup> The saying which immediately follows, in which the least commandments are manifestly an exposition of the jot and tittle, gives the explanation. If he who "breaks one of these least commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven," then the doing away with the ritual commandments seems at first to be a proceeding which does only a subordinate service to the kingdom of God, and therefore confers only a subordinate rank in that kingdom, but yet is not in itself incompatible with participation in the kingdom of heaven. Still more significant is the following statement: "But whosoever shall do and teach them, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." There it is manifest that the doing and teaching of the least commandments which is spoken of, must be altogether of a different nature from that pursued by the Pharisees; for they with their doing and teaching of the least things in the law are not only not great in the kingdom of heaven, but, as the following verse shows, do not get within the kingdom at all. Not therefore a literal, but only a spiritual doing of the least commandments can be meant here. In other words, Jesus must have acknowledged an inner content even in the most external and least things in the law,—an idea which only is to attain its true value, its fulfilment, in His kingdom. And He can only have done so with regard to the ritual commandments by conceiving them symbolically, by applying circumcision to the circumcision of the heart, sacrifice to the sacrifice of the heart, etc., as He had already done in particular constructions of the Old Testament. Thus, for example, in Luke xxii. 16, He has spoken of a fulfilling of the Passover in the kingdom of God, undoubtedly in the sense of a living communion of His people with Him who was slain for them, which He found foreshadowed in the eating (taking into themselves) of the paschal lamb. And in what other way than this—the opponents of this explanation might be asked—can Jesus have at all conceived the fulfilling promised in Matt. v. 17, even in the case of the ritual commandments? Thus the

<sup>1</sup> The first *ἴως* is to be taken in the sense of "sooner may," which does not, like the other at the end of the sentence, apply to a temporal aim (cf. Bleek, *Synoptiker*, i. p. 249). The word is paraphrased in this sense in Luke xvi. 17.

seemingly so anti-Pauline statement (Matt. v. 18) explains itself in a sense which the Apostle Paul could have unconditionally accepted. The *ἔως ἀν πάντα γένηται* at the close of the verse is manifestly related in meaning to the "shall do" in ver. 19. It is the spiritual fulfilment, the true performance of the ritual commandments. And only till this doing is in every sense complete (*ἔως*) shall the axiom hold good, that not one jot or tittle shall pass away from the law. Nothing should pass away till it was done, or fulfilled. But when they have found the highest realisation, the jot and tittle may perish, just as the breaking of the least commandment in ver. 19 is not in itself incompatible with the kingdom of heaven. Accordingly, the positive teaching of Jesus about the ritual law is, that even among these least commandments there is no mere empty vain husk without a kernel to be thrown away. In each there is a divine thought, an imperishable idea, which must come to its rights before the husk of the letter be allowed to perish. Again, what other view of the ritual law is consistent with His free inwardness on the one hand, and His belief in the divine origin of the whole Mosaic law on the other? <sup>1</sup>

#### § 4. THE FUNDAMENTAL COMMANDMENTS AS STARTING-POINT OF THE FULFILMENT

How, then, does Jesus, in consonance with this principle of fulfilment, develop His doctrine of righteousness from the Old Testament law? Above all, by setting a view of the law, as a living whole, against the prevailing piecemeal view. The

<sup>1</sup> The hasty judgment which conceives the passage (Matt. v. 18) in the extreme Judaic sense, and rejects it from the series of genuine words of Jesus, is indeed regarded in many places as the only scientific judgment. But it can neither answer the above question, nor explain the *ἴως ἀν πάντα γένηται*, nor give us any information as to how such an extreme Judaic saying could find acceptance in the Pauline Gospel of Luke. But even the puzzling explanation of Ritschl, which Wendt (*Lehre Jesu*, ii. p. 341) has again revived, that in Matt. v. 18 Jesus does not mean the Old Testament written law, but that which He fulfilled in a New Testament way, is quite impossible. *Νόμος* cannot mean anything else in ver. 18 than what it meant in ver. 17, and we can only speak of jot or tittle in the case of a positive written law, not of an unwritten ideal law.

scribes and Pharisees conceived the law as consisting of a thousand individual commandments, about whose greater or less importance there might be differences of opinion; and the actual state of the records of the law to some extent justified this. Jesus, on the other hand, finds in the law one principle with two aspects, which unites the whole, two fundamental commandments, on which the entire thousandfold legislation rests. Questioned as to the greatest commandment (Mark xii. 28; Matt. xxii. 34), He selects from the immense number of individual precepts, and from entirely different parts of the law-book, two great commandments, and designates them as the poles, the very summary of the law and the prophets: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."<sup>1</sup> These are, in point of fact, the two pillars on which a religious ethic, ideally conceived, rests. The formally unreconciled dualism might seem strange; but there can be no doubt that this dualism was reduced to unity in the mind of Jesus, that the two commandments were to Him only the religious and the moral sides of one single idea of righteousness. When He teaches the man at the altar who has injured his brother (Matt. v. 23, 24)<sup>2</sup> to be first reconciled to his brother, and then offer his gift, He does not wish to rank the brother before the heavenly Father, but to remind us of the fact that the Father above all desires to be loved in His visible image, in man (cf. 1 John iv. 20). Again, when He bases the duty of loving our enemy on the imitation of the divine original (Matt. v. 45–48), He thereby indicates that its motive is to

<sup>1</sup> The novelty in the expression of Jesus lies not only, as Weiss will have it, in the fact that He adds to the recognised first commandment the second, but still more in the fact that He designates these two commandments as the pivots of the whole law (Matt. xxii. 39; cf. vii. 12). A scribe had indeed already (Luke x.) met Jesus with the combination of these two commandments as the sum of the law. But the scribe either got this from the teaching of Jesus, or the tradition which Luke follows has here mixed up two different events, the first of which is more correctly given in Matt. xii. 28.

<sup>2</sup> The *ixos ti xata soū* does not mean merely (as Wendt, *Lehre Jesu*, p. 278, assumes from the German expression to have something against one) that the brother is angry with him who is about to sacrifice, but that he is justly angry, and has a complaint and grievance against him which prevents God from being satisfied with his offering. Cf. Rev. ii. 4, 14, 20, etc.

be found in filial love to God. And thus His fulfilment of the law consists in the fact that He places the detailed practical commandments in the light of these two inseparable commandments, and so discloses all their height and depth. The six examples of His exposition of the law which the Gospel of Matthew records in succession (v. 21-48), the discussion of murder and adultery, of divorce and swearing, of reward and the treatment of enemies, all concern individual precepts, which, though in themselves moral, become in the theocratic commonwealth more or less legal commandments, and therefore do not contain a full exhibition of those great fundamental commandments; they simply give a rough indication of their application. But He transforms them from legal back to moral; He leads them back from the sphere of commission or omission into what is the original moral sphere, the sphere of disposition, in order thus to make it evident that the gross transgression is the final outcome of a development in evil, and that the right doing He has required is simply the most elementary inclination to do the will of God. The disposition on which He falls back is everywhere love to God and our neighbour, which excludes malevolent wrath and the unchaste look, which makes marriage indissoluble, and the simple yea or nay as good as an oath, which does not reward like with like, but overcomes evil with good, and includes, in the notion of neighbour, not only friends and brethren, but even enemies. But in reference to the ritual commandments, it was impossible for Jesus to give such examples of His fulfilment of the law as He has given in this series of great moral and judicial precepts, without actually anticipating the abrogation of these commandments. In order to illustrate the fulfilment here He would have been compelled to anticipate a process of development which He fore-saw in connection with the entrance of the heathen world into His community, and with the judgment of God on Jerusalem, the approaching destruction of the temple and its worship, and by so doing He would have prepared for His disciples a situation outwardly and inwardly impossible; He would have made them strangers among their own people, without being able as yet to communicate to them His own inner freedom (cf. John xvi. 12). He therefore satisfied

Himself with making them feel, both through His teaching and His example, the relative worth of mercy and sacrifice, and thus prepared them for that inner freedom with which He Himself opposed everything that was not worship of God in spirit and in truth. It is abundantly clear, however, from two important sayings, one of which we owe to His friends, the other to His enemies, that He did intend and desire for His future community this very freedom: the saying about the new wine which should not be put into old skins (Mark ii. 22), and the prediction of the new temple not made with hands which He will set up in place of the old, which is to be broken down (Mark xiv. 58). In the first, He has expressed the impossibility of comprehending in the old customary forms of piety the new religious life which He has to communicate to His own. In the second, He has expressed the certainty that through Him will spring up, in place of the worship of God that has hitherto prevailed, one that is more inward in its nature—a worship in spirit and in truth.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> When Weiss understands both parables in Mark ii. 18–22, that of the New Cloth on the Old Garment, and that of the New Wine in the Old Skins, as a justification of the disciples of John in their fasting according to the law, the old error is simply reversed by which earlier exegetes explained both parables as a justification of the freedom from fasting of the disciples of Jesus. The first parable justifies the procedure of the Baptist with his disciples, the second that of Jesus with His. One cannot put a patch of New Testament freedom on the garment of a view that is still essentially pre-Messianic, but just as little can one enclose the new wine of the Messianic spirit in the old defective forms of Judaism. Cf. my Easter Programme, *Die Fastengleichnisse Jesu*, 1875. Weiss declares this antithetic interpretation of the two parables to be impossible on account of the connecting “and,” and because the justification of the disciples had already been given—in the image of the children of the bride-chamber. But quite apart from the fact that that “and” might be attributed to a tradition that was not clear about the meaning, an antithesis is made by a mere “and” elsewhere (for example, Matt. xii. 35). Certainly Jesus justified His disciples in the image of the children of the bride-chamber, but in the Parable of the Wine and the Skins He justifies Himself. How improbable it is that instead of doing this He should have applied to the Baptist a superfluous double justification, and indeed a most unsuitable second after a fitting first. For the comparison of a ritual freedom with new wine, and the disciples of John with old skins, would have been in the worst possible taste. As to the saying about pulling down and rebuilding the temple, Stephen at least understood it as referring to the break up of the Old Testament forms of worship in favour of the new (Acts vi. 14); and certainly this interpre-

### § 5. THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR

It is a necessary consequence of the practical character of Jesus' teaching, and His position of conflict with a professed zeal for God which lacked the simplest moral fruits in life, that in the closer statement of His doctrine of righteousness He should give the first place to love of our neighbour. But He has a twofold question to answer with regard to this. First, Who is my neighbour ? and then, What have I to do to him ? The first question was laid before Him by a scribe (Luke x. 29), who considered it a difficult one—probably because he had in his mind all kinds of narrow-hearted limitations for the idea of neighbour. Jesus answers with the story of the Good Samaritan ; that is, He sets a picture of pure human compassion over against the picture of a man in need,—a compassion which does not ask : Who is he ? a countryman, or a stranger and enemy ? but simply sets about relieving his distress. And then, in making the application, He does not ask which of those three, the priest, the Levite, and the Samaritan, was neighbour, but which of them became neighbour to him who fell among murderers ? By so doing He undoubtedly means to say, Do not stand asking who is thy neighbour, but be on the outlook for him to whom thou canst be neighbour, that is, canst show goodness and mercy (Luke x. 23–37). What is here just indicated is directly expressed in Matt. v. 43–48 : that the idea of neighbour includes even enemies, those by whom we are hated and persecuted. If the standpoint of righteousness hitherto has opposed neighbour and enemy to one another, and has therefore deduced from "thou shalt love thy neighbour" its converse, "and hate thine enemy" (ver. 43), the righteousness of the kingdom of heaven is to love even enemies, and, in case they make all other proofs of love impossible, at least to pray for those who despitefully use and persecute us.<sup>1</sup> This is demanded by the example of God the ever-merciful, who makes His sun to shine upon the evil and the good, and

tation has more in its favour than that of the evangelist John (ii. 19), who referred the words typologically to the death and resurrection of Jesus.

<sup>1</sup> This is the true reading in Matthew ; the fuller form of the saying is in Luke vi. 27, 28.

sendeth rain upon the just and the unjust. The other question, What have I to do to my neighbour? Jesus answers most concisely, Matt. vii. 12: "All that ye would that men should do to you, do ye also so to them." The human heart is so conditioned that it knows very well at all times what is due to it from others according to the law of love, while its own charitable duty is obscured by its natural selfishness. It has only therefore to change places, and ask itself what it would desire from others in a like case, in order to know what it should do in any instance. As this practical rule in a sense comprehends everything, so that He can add, "that is the law and the prophets," Jesus enters further into the meaning of the moral action. He does not proceed systematically, and with the intention of including everything, but by selection, and as the occasion required; He presupposes the Ten Commandments as constantly valid, and it is quite enough for Him to illustrate by individual examples what He meant by this continuous authority. Love to one's neighbour displays itself to Him above all in simple goodness, in doing good, and communicating, in giving without second thoughts, without counting on benefit or reward. "Give to him that asketh of thee; and from him that would borrow of thee turn thou not away" (Matt. v. 42; Luke vi. 34, 35). A speech at table, which must be taken as a parable (Luke xiv. 13, 14), exhorts: "When thou makest a feast, invite not thy friends, relations, and rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee, and a recompense be made thee. But rather invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind, who cannot recompense thee: and thou shalt be blessed." A picture which reminds us of those words of Jesus preserved by Paul, Acts xx. 35: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." To spend our earthly goods on the poor is to Him the best and most faithful management of them, to make to ourselves, as it is said in Luke xvi. 9, friends with the unrighteous Mammon. By the side of giving appears, with special emphasis, the duty of forgiving. The forgiveness of wrong is to be granted not only seven times, as Peter wished, but seventy times seven—that is, without limits (Matt. xviii. 21; Luke xvii. 3, 4). For, as stated in the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer, and illustrated in the Parable of the Unfaithful

Servant (Matt. xviii. 23), the divine forgiveness which we so much need is conditioned by the human forgiveness which we exercise. He only belongs to the kingdom of love as a recipient, who also wishes to belong to it as an agent; he who proceeds according to cold justice has only strict justice to expect. Not that this duty of placability and forgiveness excludes the duty of "rebuke" (*ἐλέγχειν*), that is, of urging to improvement. In fact, it goes hand in hand with forgiveness, especially when a brother in the narrower sense, a fellow-member in the Church of Christ, is concerned, in whose case such a step has most likelihood of success (Luke xvii. 3 ff.; Matt. xviii. 15–21). But the duty of love to forgive sincerely, and to remove every feeling of wrath and revenge, remains, even where there is no apology or change of mind, as is shown by the exhortation to the love of all enemies (Luke vi. 37, 38). On the other hand, there is a zeal for improvement which is not the best, for nothing but true love is able to reform. Jesus therefore, above all, warns men against judging and condemning, that is, against all loveless sentences on the defects of our neighbour, invading the functions of the eternal Judge (Matt. vii. 1 f.; Luke vi. 37). And because to reform, or rather to save a neighbour, to win him for the kingdom of God (Matt. xviii. 15), is certainly the last and highest aim of love, so love begins in personal reformation, in putting away all causes of offence; and love knows no more serious fault against a neighbour than to provoke him, that is, to give him offence, to make him stumble, and go astray on the way to God. "Thou hypocrite," cries our Lord therefore to the loveless and self-righteous man who judges his neighbour, "first cast out the beam (the beam of heartless pride) from thine own eye, and then thou shalt see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (Matt. vii. 3–5; Luke vi. 41). And in this world full of offences He warns, in the strongest words, against giving offence even to the least, hurting or endangering one soul, whose angel, on that account, carries a complaint before God's presence: "It were better for that man that a millstone were hung about his neck, and he were cast into the depths of the sea" (Matt. xviii. 6, 7, 10). Finally, the means by which love may hope most surely to win a neigh-

bour for the cause of God are self-denying service on the one hand, and a goodness of heart on the other, which is not extinguished by the evil it meets with, but burns the brighter. It lies in the nature of the case that Jesus has to commend the first chiefly with regard to the intercourse of the members of the kingdom with one another, and the second especially with regard to the world and enemies. His rule for the mutual intercourse of His friends is that none of them should exalt himself above the other, or wish at all to rule, but that their one ambition should be as to who should perform the greatest service of love (Matt. xx. 26, 27). To those, however, who do not know this spirit of love, it is to be made the more apparent, by rewarding evil with good, cursing with blessing, persecution with beneficence and intercession, for in this way the evil is actually to be overcome by the good; because such conduct is the true divine stamp on a human character which no heart at all susceptible to the divine can in the long run withstand (Matt. v. 38-48; Luke vi. 28-31; cf. Rom. xii. 19-21).

#### § 6. LOVE TOWARDS GOD

All these duties of love towards our neighbour must be discharged as a matter of course, in virtue of a love to God, who alone is absolutely worthy of love; as indeed Jesus Himself completed His life's work of love through the love of the Father. Though His formal teaching about the love of God was not as exhaustive as that about the practical love of our neighbour, yet it is the great unspoken presupposition of His whole doctrine of righteousness, and, like it, is treated on many sides in substance if not in form. Although He nowhere gives a general exposition of the love of God, He lets it be seen throughout that He places it not in any special sensibility, but in those features of disposition which correspond to the relation of the child to his heavenly Father. The first of these features is sincerity, truthfulness with respect to God. God sees in secret, looks on the heart, and love is a matter of the heart. All worship of God which does not come from the heart, which is not directed to God from the heart, is vain and hypocritical; and nothing gave

Jesus greater offence in the case of the Pharisees than the want of inward truth in their piety, with all their fancy that it was real (cf. Matt. vi. 1-6, vi. 16-18, xxiii. 13 f.). With this sincerity is further connected humility, in virtue of which the genuine child makes no further claim for himself than the free love and goodness of the Father grants him. It is so important, because on it the full accessibility of the child to the love of the Father wholly depends; "for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble;" that is, to such as are poor in spirit, who, needing love and susceptible to love, are ever ready to receive it. Jesus delineates this humility as springing from the feeling of deep indebtedness, in contrast with self-complacent righteousness and pride parading before God, in the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican (Luke xviii. 9-14). But even where there is and can be no such feeling of guilt as that of the publican, humility must spring from the consciousness that we can neither perform anything towards God, nor deserve anything from Him, that when our legal relation towards Him is considered, we are only servants obliged to serve Him, and, moreover, unprofitable servants, who, when they have done all, have only done their duty, and have scarcely repaid that which their Lord has laid out on them (Luke xvii. 7-10 f.). The fear of God, therefore, which indeed is more an Old Testament idea, but has its place also in the new covenant, as a preparatory stage, at least, of the love of God, borders on humility. The true earnest, pious, filial love can only unfold itself on the basis of a holy awe before Him who is our Father, and at the same time our Lord and eternal Judge. Jesus exhorted men to the fear of God on one occasion at least. "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. x. 28). He is there led to this conception by the fear of man and the fear of death, which are to be expelled by the fear of God; elsewhere He prefers to set the more pleasing duty of trust, in opposition to the natural anxiety and care of the human heart. Trust, faith (*πίστις θεοῦ*, trust in God, Mark xi. 22), is indeed the natural expression, not of the slavish, but of the filial relation to God into which He brings His own people. Con-

sequently, even in that passage which treats of the fear of God (Matt. x. 29 f.), He at once proceeds to treat of faith, and repeatedly rebukes the little faith of His disciples—as, for instance, in the case in which they feared (Mark iv. 40) that the heavenly Father could permit the little ship which bore them along with Him to be swallowed up by the waves, and cries out to them, Mark xi. 22 : ἔχετε πλοτίν θεοῦ. In this *πλοτίς θεοῦ*, anxious care about earthly things, and even necessary things, disappears ; the troubled questions, What shall we eat ? What shall we drink ? Wherewith shall we be clothed ? must be left by the child of God to the heathen, who know not of any heavenly Father. For he has indeed a rich Father, who feeds the fowls of the heaven and clothes the lilies of the field, who knows what His children need before they ask Him (Matt. vi. 25 f.; Luke xii. 22). On the other hand, deeds in the name of God are to spring from this *πλοτίς*, a holy courage which in His service will remove even mountains, for trust or faith draws down miraculous powers from heaven to earth (Mark xi. 23, 24; Matt. xvii. 20). This carries us onward to prayer, that blessed childlike duty of love to which Jesus so urgently exhorts and encourages His own (Matt. vii. 7–21; Luke xi. 5–13). That is to spring from faith or trust in God (Mark xi. 22, 24), and this trust shall not be deceived : “Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” But this does not mean that the filial relation and childlike right of prayer should be an encouragement to selfish wishes. If Jesus does not expressly guard His promise of being heard against such a misunderstanding, that is owing to the fact that to Him it is quite a matter of course that filial trust cannot exist without obedience and submission ; that it lies in the nature of the childlike converse with the heavenly Father to come to an understanding with Him and meet His thoughts of love ; that true prayer is not at all in the first instance an asking for particular finite blessings, but an opening of the heart to the eternal good. And this is the only sense in which His own prayer in Gethsemane was heard (Heb. v. 7),—and in this sense no true prayer remains unanswered. The best proof of this is the model prayer which He Himself taught His disciples (Matt. vi. 9–13 ;

Luke xi. 1-4). It, above all, lifts the child of God above the earth and its little cares and needs; makes the human heart forget itself, and rise to the great cares of the heavenly Father's heart, in which, however, its own truest good is hid; it seeks that the name of God, His holy and gracious revelation to the world, be truly appreciated, received, and sanctified even in this world; that, in consequence of this, the kingdom of God, the holy and blessed fellowship with God, may come ever more completely, and so the glorious goal of the union of heaven and earth be brought ever nearer; that the will of God be done on earth as in heaven, done in the praying child of God and through him. Only after the child of God has thus given expression three times to the great eternal concerns, does he come to his own little temporal concerns in a way as truthful as sufficient, and ends with asking for the removal of the hindrances which ever and again seek to thrust themselves between him and his heavenly Father, the indebtedness ever again emerging, the temptation still threatening his weakness, the manifold world-powers of evil. That is everything; it is a kind of paraphrase and embodiment of the great words of the Sermon on the Mount: "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things (the necessary earthly) will be added unto you." And this brings us to what is probably the tersest practical explanation of love to God in the sense of Jesus. It consists in this: to bring together in one all that has been said; that to us God is really the highest good and the only absolute good; that we steadfastly and undividedly resign ourselves to this eternal good, and that in pursuing this aim no finite weal or woe disturbs us.

#### § 7. LOVE OF GOD AND APPRAISING OF THE WORLD

It is an old objection, which is ever being repeated, that this spiritual standpoint of Jesus, however its sublimity may be recognised, is onesided, and tends to renunciation of the world. However applicable this objection may be to much in the subsequent history of Christianity, there is no ground for bringing it against Jesus' own doctrine of righteousness. The God and Father of Jesus Christ is too great, too magnanimous,

to rob the earthly things and ordinances of that glory which He Himself, as Creator, has given to them. To Jesus nature is not a thing indifferent or undivine. He lovingly contemplated it, and drank from its cup of blameless joy in a spirit opposed to monasticism. He pointed His disciples to the rain and sunshine, to the fowls of heaven and the lilies of the field, as imaging the goodness of His heavenly Father's heart. The life of man in all its various details, from the labour of the sower and the housewife at her baking, up to the cares of a king waging war, or the feelings of a father's heart swelling towards a son who had been lost, engaged His thoughts. Human life was sometimes to Him a symbol of the laws of the growth of the kingdom of God, and sometimes a mirror of the good or evil ruling in the human heart. It is true that He did not didactically enlarge upon the whole circle of social duties. That was not His mission. His mission was to put right the highest and most inward relation of human life, the relation to God and eternity, not to interfere in the way of remodelling the several finite relations of earth. He could leave that to the new and abiding spirit which He was certain to establish among men. He knew that His kingdom was a leaven mighty enough to leaven the whole life of the world with new powers of development. And He expressly acknowledged the right and honour of the most important relations of the world. Marriage is an arrangement for this earth alone; in that other world they neither marry nor are given in marriage (Mark xii. 25; Matt. xx. 30; Luke xx. 35); yet to Him it was holy as it had never been before Him; He proposed the most ideal view of it, the idea of an indissoluble divine institution. Moses allowed the bill of divorce only because of the hardness of the hearts of Israel; but from the beginning, that is, from the creation, it was not so, and among those who desire to belong to the kingdom of God it shall not be so henceforth (Matt. v. 32, xix. 16; Mark x. 9). The civil commonweal, the State, came into contact with Him only in the form of the heathen domination of Rome over His people, yet He gave to it what was its own. In His answer to the question about tribute He ended the confusion of religion and politics in the old covenant, due to the theocratic theories of the Jews, and thereby pronounced the State to be a kingdom

of this world. But while His great saying, "Give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's," recognises civil and religious duty as two separate things existing peacefully side by side, it preserves to the State its independent sphere of right which is not to be encroached upon even in the name of God (that is, of religion, Mark xii. 13–17; Matt. xxii. 15–22; Luke xx. 20–26). A false contempt for the world might be more readily found in His treatment of that which then as now rules the world, viz. mammon. Among all the good things which God has made He regarded as least of all that which we call without disguise earthly good, because it is the material foundation of our whole outward condition. He contrasts the "unrighteous mammon," the conscienceless seductive idol of the world, with the *ἀληθινόν*, the true, that is, the spiritual moral good (Luke xvi. 11). And, in order to discourage men from clinging to it, He points out that this unrighteous mammon is in its nature so foreign to and so incommensurate with the God related soul that it cannot be its actual property. Spiritual blessings are bestowed by God on man as a gift; they become a part of him, an element of his inner life; money God gives to man only for a time, intrusts him with it only as a steward in order to take it back in the hour of death at latest (Luke xii. 16–20). There always remains—says Jesus to His disciples (Luke xvi. 10–12)—an *ἄλλοτρον*, in contrast to the *ὑμέτερον* which God has bestowed on you. And yet the divine reasonableness of the teaching of Jesus is preserved even here. In the same saying (Luke xvi. 10–12) this least and meanest of the blessings God bestows is also morally estimated, and its management characterised as a school of faithfulness (toward God), without which the true and permanent good would not have been intrusted to us.<sup>1</sup> And in the Parable of the Unrighteous Steward which precedes these sayings in Luke, Jesus teaches

<sup>1</sup> We must not, however, in this saying bring the fidelity into connection with the unfaithfulness of the unrighteous steward. The grouping of Luke xvi. 1–9 and 10–12 must be attributed to the evangelist, and is accounted for by the one theme, money. But in treating of this theme the saying and the parable employ entirely different images. Of the latter, in which not the faithfulness or unfaithfulness, but the initial foolishness and (subsequent) wisdom of the steward forms the *tertium comparationis*, I have spoken in my *Leben Jesu*, ii. pp. 386–389.

how even the unrighteous mammon may be placed at the service of the highest task in life, and employed by us to secure for ourselves a welcome into the eternal habitations. The teaching of Jesus about love towards God does not therefore exclude, but includes the healthy moral estimate of the visible world, the using of all its God-given goods. But it must be a *healthy* moral estimate, which recognises that every temporal good has its measure, and has only a qualified worth. The whole world as the sum of the finite and conditioned good must be subordinate and subject to the infinite and unconditioned good. The inalienable law and commandment to love God with all the heart, means, that the heart be not divided between God and any of His creatures; that it love no finite good beside Him, and at the cost of fidelity to Him, but that it be prepared, on the contrary, in case of collision, to sacrifice every such good for Him. And Jesus has taught and urged that with not less inexorable earnestness. When He saw that the heart of the rich young man, with all its noble enthusiasm, was clinging to earthly good, He demanded of him that he give all his riches to the poor and follow Him in apostolic poverty; and in the same sense He gave a general warning against all mistaken attempts to serve two masters at one and the same time, God and mammon. He uttered these warnings, not against possessing, but against amassing treasure on earth, against the seeking for riches as though there lay in them a real treasure: for where your treasure is,—it may be on earth or it may be in heaven,—there your heart is also (Matt. vi. 21). But the love of God may also require larger sacrifices than wealth. For though Jesus regarded marriage as holy and of divine institution, He yet suggested the idea to His disciples that it might be their duty for the sake of the kingdom of God, that is, for their individual calling in that kingdom, to renounce marriage and pass through this world alone (Matt. xix. 12). In a metaphorical address on offences He tells His disciples: "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out; if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off;" that is, if the dearest and best, that which is as precious to thy heart as eye and hand are to the outer man, draw thee away from the love of God and seduce thee to sin, pluck it out of thy heart, cut it off in pain from thy life (Mark ix. 43–48; Matt. xviii. 7–9). In

the same connection, too, we have: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me; and he that hateth not children, and brothers, and sisters, yea, and his own life (that is, puts them into the background, and esteems them less than Me),<sup>1</sup> cannot be My disciple" (Matt. x. 37, 38; Luke xiv. 26). That which He here demands in His own name, surrender on an emergency of the noblest earthly possessions, or even of life itself, He demands indeed in the name of God whose cause He represented in the world up to the surrender of His own life, that is, as a sacrifice from love to God.

#### § 8. LOVE FOR GOD AND SELF-PERFECTION

It might, however, appear as though in all this a religious demand, carried through with sublime onesidedness, were opposed to the free moral development of the human personality, as if, according to this teaching, God, with the absolute demand to love Him above all, required, as it were, the life of man as a sacrifice for Himself. The very opposite of that is the case. In the God of Jesus Christ whom man is to love above all else, he loves nothing foreign in which he might lose himself, and nothing selfish to which he could fall a sacrifice, but his own eternal prototype, in whose masterful liberality alone he can realise his own idea; it is the heavenly Father who comes to meet him with arms of love, and in whose heart he first truly finds himself and "gains himself" for ever. And therefore the unqualified love for God which Jesus demands coincides rather with that moral self-love which is already presupposed as legitimate and self-evident in the command: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." By making the love of God the fundamental law of his life a man procures his own true and lasting good, he helps his own personality to its free development and eternal perfection. That is not a point of view which we obtain from the gospel of Jesus by subtle modern trains of thought, but one which Jesus Himself has offered, and has indeed developed *con amore*,

<sup>1</sup> According to the relative meaning of the Greek *μισίν*, which the comparison of Luke xiv. 26 with the parallel passage Matt. x. 37 plainly yields, and which also Gen. xxv. 32, Septuagint, and Rom. ix. 13 attest.

and with the advancement of it we shall therefore most fittingly conclude our study of His doctrine of righteousness, especially as we have here no kind of connection with words of the Old Testament law, but with the most free and independent ethical train of thought. "What is a man advantaged," cries Jesus to His disciples (Matt. xvi. 26), "if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul"?<sup>1</sup> To preserve his soul and save it throughout his earthly existence is here recognised to be, as a matter of course, the highest business of man's life, the "one thing needful" (Luke x. 38-42). He can only fulfil this one unqualified task by surrender, not to the world, but to God. The human personality, with its capacities for the supersensuous and eternal, can only preserve and perfect itself by growing up into the supersensuous and eternal (by being rich in God, laying up treasure in heaven, as it is expressed, Luke xii. 20; Matt. vi. 20). If, on the other hand, it throws itself away on the world, the summary of all that is sensuous and finite, then it loses itself indeed, even though it has gained the whole world. It pines and dies inwardly, and this inward dying becomes—as in the case of the rich man in the parable—manifest in it as soon as death removes it from the world of sense. The foolishness of the natural man, as Jesus depicts it in that rich master (Luke xii. 16 f.), does not, of course, recognise this, it supposes that life consists in the abundance of its goods. It seeks life in the sensible and finite, because these satisfy for the moment the natural selfishness. Because of this natural selfishness, which is just the opposite of moral self-love, the way to the true life for every man passes through a death struggle. The perverted selfish I must die, in order that the true I, the man created for God, may live in the love of God, in the atmosphere of the eternal life. Jesus expresses this in words which have their occasion in the approaching summons to His first disciples to accompany Him, at the risk of their life, on His last journey to Jerusalem, and which turn this very occasion to account for making inward and universal the duty of imitation that is here exemplified.

<sup>1</sup> For the original text does not speak of a mere injury to the soul, as it seems from the Lutheran translation, but a condemnation, a *damnum accipere anima*, as is clear especially from the parallels of Mark and Luke.

He who loveth his life (egoistically) will lose it (in the eternal sense), but he who loses it for my sake—surrenders it in self-denial—will find it, or, as it is in Mark and Luke, will save it (Mark viii. 34, 35; Matt. x. 39; Luke ix. 23, 24).<sup>1</sup> And because it is difficult for the natural man to yield thus to the death of self-denial, and because it is not finished by one great self-denial, but rather is followed by an infinite series of continuous acts of self-denial for God's sake, the gate is certainly strait, and the way steep, which, from the door of entrance, leadeth up to life, and few there be that find it. On the other hand, wide is the gate and broad the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in therem (Matt. vii. 13, 14; Luke xiii. 24). For nothing is easier and more comfortable than to remain as we are by nature, and give free course to the sensuous selfish instincts; but the end of the way *here* is the abyss, *there* the clear heights on which the earthly pilgrim surveys the world and breathes the air of heaven. Human life now first gains a worthy content and an actual aim; it gains—to speak in the language of the labourers in the vineyard, Matt. xx. 1–15—its labour and its reward. A complete and noble conception of life may be developed from this parable, though it was first applied to the relation of labour and reward in the kingdom of God. The true work of life begins with the call of the heavenly householder, who draws a man into the service of His kingdom. As it is said in the parable of those whom that call had not reached, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" so is it in point of fact with the life of him who has not yet learned to serve the heavenly Father. His life, however full of toil and labour it may be, is in the highest sense of existence a busy idleness, a bestirring of himself for nothing, a toil and trouble without any true abiding fruit. It is quite different when a man places himself in God's service, and labours in love for Him and for his brethren. His labour then, however modest it may be in itself, gains, for the first time, a moral consecration, and procures an actual blessing. And though its results should be outwardly imperceptible to others, its moral fruit, its blessing, ripens in himself, by becoming to him a school of personal confirmation in the love

<sup>1</sup> Or to preserve it alive, *ζωοντίσσει*, as it is in Luke xvii. 38.

of God, a school of self-denial, of sanctification and fidelity. And a view of the world which does not regard the human soul as existing mainly for the purpose of revolving as a useful driving wheel in human society, but in order to develop and perfect itself in the image of God according to its God-given rights, lays the main stress on this very thing. This is the thought in all those parables in which Jesus treats of labour in the service of the kingdom of God—there are a whole series of them for refuting the illusion that an idle faith satisfied Him—the Parable of the Servants who watch far into the night for the return of their Lord from the Marriage (Luke xii. 36–48); or that of their Lord journeying into a far Country, delivering unto them hundredweights or pounds of money (talents or minæ of his goods), wherewith in his absence they might increase his wealth (Matt. xxv. 14–30; Luke xix. 11–27); and not least in that Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard, where it manifestly makes no difference to the householder to get so much work done, but to occupy idle people, and apply his beneficence, not to beggars, but to workers. Everywhere here the worth of labour is not measured by the amount of work done,—which is dependent on individual gifts (Matt. xxv. 15), or on outer circumstances (Matt. xx. 6),—but by the fidelity displayed in it. “Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” And, lastly, there appears in this connection also the idea of the reward which is promised to such labour. The reward grows, as it were, naturally out of the labour, in order to crown it at its close. We have already alluded to the idea of reward in so far as it springs out of Jesus’ idea of God: here it comes into consideration in its significance for the life of man. It is not necessary to confine it everywhere to the future world. Jesus, in His idea of the kingdom, does not so separate this world from that which is to come as to make the divine reward everywhere begin only after death. Once, at any rate, He reckons as part of the reward which He promises to His disciples the compensating brotherly love which is to make good to them an hundredfold, though with persecutions (therefore still on earth in the Christian community), for all sacrifices which

they will have to make for God (Mark x. 30; Matt. xix. 29). Eternal life is, however, the prevailing idea of the heavenly reward, and, in this very passage, is characterised as the more essential. The whole gospel of Jesus attests that no Mohammedan paradise is therewith meant, but that perfect communion with God for which the soul is destined, and for which it waits in hope here below, the perfection of the personality in God—not in a blessed idleness, but in an exalted kingly work and activity (Luke xix. 17). How foolish then to take offence at this idea, and prefer a view of the world in which human labour, though done in God, would not be eternally rewarded or have any abiding issue. Is it the standpoint of a lower morality to seek after the perfection of our personality in God, and the standpoint of a higher to fight but not to conquer, to strive but not to reach that for which we were striving? That even in such a representation as the Parable of the Day Labourers there is no mention of merit with God, is clear from the fact that the same reward is given for unequal work. If, elsewhere, mention is made of special and therefore unequal reward (cf. Luke xix. 17–19), that simply means that the blessed perfection shall be for each the individual crowning of individual work, and yet be for all the equally full satisfaction (the whole penny, Matt. xx. 9). But the contract at the beginning of the parable which gives an appearance of legal desert is only stated in order to be confounded, for the meaning of the parable is that there is indeed a divine reward, but that it is not good to ask, with Peter, "What shall we have therefore?" but to leave payment, like those hired late in the day, to the free goodness of the householder's heart. The reward is thus a reward of work, and yet a reward of grace; for if the labour to be crowned in eternity did not stand under the sign-manual of grace, would not the child of God despair of being able to perform such an infinite task as "be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect"? The teaching of Jesus about reward, however,—and that is not its least excellence,—gives the promise, the assurance, that, however infinite the task which His doctrine of righteousness imposes, yet with God's help His own shall not fail to gain the victory and the crown.

## CHAPTER VI

## THE MESSIANIC SALVATION

## § 1. THE FACT OF A DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

The closing consideration just offered brings us now to the fact that it was necessary for Jesus to draw from the nature of the eternally Good, whom He calls Father, a further deduction than the demand for holiness; besides His ideal of righteousness He must present a not less exalted and perfect doctrine of grace or salvation. Certainly, in the not distant past, there was a mode of thought which refused to recognise, alongside of the doctrine of righteousness, any independent doctrine of salvation in the Gospels. Rationalism, in turning back from the doctrine of the Church, which was based essentially on Paul, to Jesus' own plainer gospel, received the impression that this gospel is essentially a system of ethics, and so is the highest and purest development of the demand made upon us by the will of God; and that, on the other hand, the awards bestowed by the will of God consist solely in the benefits of creation, the fatherly providence of God, and His recompense in the world to come. Such an impression can be easily understood, inasmuch as there is no such connected development of the doctrine of salvation in the synoptic Gospels as there is of the doctrine of righteousness in the Sermon on the Mount. For all that, the obliquity and defectiveness of that conception is evident. If it were as this onesidedly ethical mode of thought supposed, then the teaching of Jesus would be no gospel at all, but essentially law; and the higher this law rose above the Old Testament, the more perfect it was in its demands for the purest feelings, and in its penetrating into the inmost depths of the sinful heart, the more cheerless and startling would be a proclamation which connected a share in the kingdom of heaven with this better righteousness (Matt. v. 20). The commands of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, however admirable as commandments they might be, would, in point of fact, represent "no easy yoke and no light burden" (Matt. xi. 30),

but burdens to be borne by sinful men, far heavier than the commandments of Moses and the scribes. But there is nothing more certain than that Jesus had no wish to be another and a stricter Moses, but a consoler of the weary and heavy laden, a saviour of the poor in spirit, a deliverer of the lost. His preaching from beginning to end is a gospel, a glad message, a proclamation of salvation ; and therefore His doctrine of righteousness, however large the space it occupies, can only be conceived as part of a doctrine of grace and salvation, which underlies and pervades it throughout. Even the Sermon on the Mount, this great summary of the doctrine of righteousness, rests on the basis of a preaching of salvation ; for those are called blessed who are poor in spirit, or mourners, or hungering for righteousness, and to them the kingdom of heaven, with its gifts, is promised. Nay, the very first preaching of Jesus presents in living unity the divine demands and offers of salvation. For if the call, "Repent : for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," might perhaps mean, in the mind of the Baptist, repent : for the day of judgment, the day of separating the chaff from the wheat, is near, it did mean, in the case of Jesus at anyrate, repent : for the Father's arms are open to receive all His lost children, and draw them to His heart. And therefore we can only ascribe it to a one-sided and imperfect understanding of Jesus' thoughts of the kingdom of heaven, if the wood has not been seen here for the trees. The whole of Jesus' preaching of the kingdom of heaven is a proclamation of grace, a doctrine of salvation, and it is united with the doctrine of righteousness in the manner of the Augustinian "Domine, da quod jubes, et jube quod vis." Not as though Jesus had deprived man of moral freedom. On the contrary,—and the ethical conception of His doctrine just rejected is quite right in this,—the presupposition that man is incapable of doing the will of God on account of sin is unknown to Jesus. He demands of men throughout the doing of His commandments, the doing of the divine will. He credits them throughout with the power to repent, that is, to change their mind, and become of that mind, in virtue of which one can only truly do the commandments of God in detail. And He not only credits them with this freedom, on the authority of His word and gospel, but also on the authority

of the words of the Old Testament, the law and the prophets. It is by no means meant ironically when He directs the scribes to the two great commandments (Luke x. 23 f.), "Do this, and you will live"; or the rich young man (Matt. xix. 17), "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." It is said of the brethren of the rich man, Luke xvi. 29: "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them" (viz. in the interest of their own conversion). The poor Lazarus, in the same parable, has heard Moses and the prophets, and in their school has developed an inner life which could bear him at death on angel's wings into paradise; and Abraham, the patriarchs, the prophets, according to Luke xvi. 22, Matt. viii. 12, have arrived there. But we would completely misunderstand Jesus if, because of this judgment, we put Him in contradiction with the knowledge and experience of the great Apostle to the Gentiles, that no man is justified by the works of the law, that is, if we would credit Him with the idea that any man can convert himself to God, or fulfil His commandments of his own power, in the Judaic-Pharisaic sense, so that he should earn merit in the sight of God. The idea that anyone can come to God except through God, that anyone can love God without first knowing that he was loved by God—this genuinely Pharisaic idea is so repugnant to a true religious standpoint, that Jesus did not even find it necessary to reject it. He could only ascribe to an Old Testament man the power of turning to God and of keeping His commandments, because even in the old covenant there was for him a saving grace which drew men to itself from pure goodness;<sup>1</sup> because He undoubtedly did not contemplate the law from the point of view of a power which merely exacts and judges, but as the outflow of the divine goodness of the Father (cf. Mark ii. 27)—how much more would He find everywhere in the history of Israel and the predictions of the prophets, the gracious and merciful, the good and faithful One, who, with His prevenient love, knocks for an entrance at the human heart, and leads it from the way of death to that of life. If He found the utterance of this eternal love itself in nature, in God's making the sun to shine, and the

<sup>1</sup> Even Paul has admitted such an Old Testament grace, at least for Abraham (Rom. iv.).

rain to fall on the just and the unjust, how much more would He find it in the features and experiences of the inner life (cf. John vi. 44, 45). The prodigal son could arise and go to his father, only because the memory of his father's house, with its riches and its goodness, revived in him; and the publican could beat his breast and cry, "God, be merciful to me a sinner," only because he knew of a gracious God, with whom there is forgiveness (Ps. cxxx. 7). There prevails, therefore, even in the Old Testament, the same law of prevenient grace which in the New Testament speaks to a power of freedom unlost and a susceptibility for God, in order to hasten it heavenwards. Only, this grace is now first revealed in its whole height and depth, and therefore in its full saving power. "All the prophets and the law have prophesied until John: from that time the glad message of the kingdom of God is preached" (Matt. xi. 13; Luke xvi. 16). Those earlier revelations of God were only of a preparatory and predictive nature. They did not help humanity as a whole, they did not entirely help any man; even the best have still remained bad (*πονηροί*, Matt. vii. 11), and the world as a whole has fallen ever deeper into the power of evil. But now has come the day of the great change, when Satan falls like lightning from heaven (Luke x. 18). Now the fulness of the time has come, the time when God is to visit His people (Luke x. 44), the acceptable year of the Lord, when He has anointed and sent His servant with a glad message to the poor, freedom to the captives, forgiveness to the broken-hearted (Luke iv. 18). And though the heavenly Father has at all times received the penitent sinner, and given strength to those who walk aright, yet the idea of salvation is only now truly and completely realised, when the Shepherd Himself, in His eternal love and faithfulness, has gone forth to seek and save the lost (Matt. xviii. 11 f.; Luke xv. 3 f., xix. 10).

#### § 2. THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN AS SALVATION

We may therefore say, that the kingdom of heaven which Jesus preaches and brings is itself essentially salvation, is salvation in its objective reality, and in the mode of its accomplishment in time. This perception to which we have been

led by our former discussion of the idea of the kingdom, would indeed be worthless if the view attached to the introductory sayings of the Sermon on the Mount by a celebrated scholar ~~was~~<sup>the</sup> correct, viz. that the fundamental thought of Jesus was directed solely to the awakening of a pious frame of mind, which in its humility before God attains of itself the highest satisfaction, and to such extent, that a mind of this nature as being poor in spirit already possesses the kingdom of heaven, the eternal riches.<sup>1</sup> This would make the kingdom of heaven solely the subjective product of humility, of being poor in spirit. But this idea is in itself impossible. Poverty does not produce riches ; hunger and thirst, even hunger and thirst for righteousness, do not of themselves suddenly change into satisfaction ; there must be presented to them an objective reality which satisfies them. Nor is it difficult to refute that misconception of words of Jesus, which are certainly of the nature of a programme, by a reference to the words themselves, —a misconception which proceeds from the point of view of the pure immanence. We are not justified in taking the second clause in the first beatitude in the sense of a real possession already present, because the promises on which the succeeding beatitudes are based are expressed in the future tense (*κληρονομήσουσιν, παρακληθήσονται, χορτασθήσονται, κ.τ.λ.*). The kingdom of heaven, it is said, is theirs ; it is destined for them, is even in existence for them ; but that does not mean that being poor in spirit is in itself the eternal riches ; it is the susceptibility for such riches, and therefore they must be communicated to it by the free goodness of God. Moreover, in many of His parables Jesus puts the nature of the kingdom of heaven beyond all question as a blessing of salvation coming to meet man in objective reality. It is like a hidden treasure which one finds, a pearl of great price which one must purchase ; it is a feast which the heavenly householder prepares for the poor, the lame, the beggars from the streets ; it is so much a gift of grace, that he who will not receive it as a child (Mark x. 15) will never obtain it. But the kingdom of

<sup>1</sup> Thus Baur in his *Lectures on New Testament Theology*, pp. 62–64. It is here said in so many words that being poor in spirit is the pure feeling of the need of redemption, which as such already contains all reality of redemption.

heaven is, as we have found above,<sup>1</sup> a gift of salvation in the twofold uniform sense, that it forms at one and the same time the goal of the salvation that is to be sought, and the power of salvation which quickens and qualifies for this seeking. Here stands out in its full significance the development of His first preaching of the kingdom of heaven as at hand, into the double view of a kingdom that has come and one that is still future, such as we have proved it at the beginning. The kingdom of heaven itself must bring us into the kingdom of heaven. The present growing kingdom brings on the future; it is the means of attaining the perfected kingdom. As Jesus says, in the maxim quoted several times already (Mark x. 15), "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of heaven (take it into himself) as a little child, shall in no wise enter into it," οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθῃ. But between the starting-point, in which any one receives the kingdom that has come, and the final point when he is to find acceptance on his part into the future kingdom, lies, as it were, the whole of Jesus' teaching of righteousness, which thus proves itself to be an essential constituent of His doctrine of grace and salvation. No attentive reader of the Sermon on the Mount can fail to notice the violent contradiction which apparently prevails between the introduction and the progress of the address. In the introduction, in particular, the kingdom is connected solely with a childlike acceptance, with being poor in spirit, hungering and thirsting after righteousness; but later in the sermon it is connected with the highest moral conditions, the possession of a better righteousness than the scribes and Pharisees can show, with a being perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect (Matt. v. 20, 48). The peculiarity of Jesus' idea of the kingdom just alluded to resolves this contradiction. The kingdom in its future perfection naturally presupposes a perfectly righteous people, for how could the eternally Good, the holy God, enter into an uninterrupted blessed communion with any other than such as were perfectly righteous? But the kingdom now in process of growth, beginning as a grain of mustard seed, can be satisfied with the lowest of all requirements, that of pure susceptibility, for it is a living seed and a productive power; it will itself abundantly supply the righteousness for

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 49 ff.

which the poor in spirit hunger and thirst. According to the law of grace, that "to him who hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance" (Mark iv. 25; Matt. xxv. 29), the kingdom of heaven, received as a divine seed, a heavenly productive power, will bring forth in the man the fruit of eternal life, and raise him from one degree of righteousness to another, until he become perfect as his Father in heaven is perfect. Thus Jesus' doctrine of righteousness, with all its strictness, merges into His doctrine of salvation. It is only the negative pole to the positive pole of the doctrine of grace. It is nowhere law in contrast with gospel, but law in the gospel itself. For even that most elementary fundamental demand of the kingdom of heaven, without the fulfilment of which it cannot be bestowed, the condition of being poor in spirit, is not pure demand, but the gospel of the kingdom itself seeks to call forth that longing and susceptibility by holding forth the riches of heavenly love: "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Wonderful gospel of Jesus, admirable not only in its height and depth, satisfying on all sides human need, but also in its simplicity and perfect transparency! The kingdom of heaven is simply the opening of communion with the eternal love. No one acquires this love of himself, still less does he beget it within himself through mere need of love; it is bestowed upon him, it comes to him from heaven, in order to raise him up to its own heaven of love. Of course, it has moral conditions. It does not force itself upon us, but gives itself only to the hearts which open to receive it, and it cannot retain and increase communion with them, unless they let themselves be formed and fashioned by it into its own nature. But these holy conditions are conditions of love, nay, are proofs of love. They not only aim at the true best of the beloved, at the beatific perfection of the communion of love, but the eternal love itself helps to fulfil them. It works freely in those into whom it enters both to will and to do. From what has been said it is clear that in this chapter on Jesus' doctrine of salvation we have to do essentially with the kingdom in process of growth, as already present and operative. And in order to estimate His saving activity more precisely we have first to give attention to the manner and results of the saving influences, that is, the

way of salvation, then the several outward means by which the kingdom becomes operative, that is, His doctrine of the means of salvation.

### § 3. THE WAY OF SALVATION, CALLING AND ELECTION

If we look beyond the objective fact of the salvation that is embodied in the manifested kingdom of God to the law of its subjective realisation, it is evident that it will begin with a divine offer or invitation, with the "call," as Jesus expressed Himself in a metaphor which has also passed into apostolic usage. It corresponds to the prevenient mercy which is characteristic of the love of God, and not less does it suit the strayed and lost condition of man that the divine salvation does not wait till it is sought. This is the glory of the time of grace that began with the days of John the Baptist, that God comes to meet man as He never did before, and invites him to participate in His saving gifts. In the most beautiful images, now that of a rich, kindly householder who invites to his sumptuous table, first his own distinguished friends, and then the beggars and strangers; and now that of a faithful shepherd, who goes to the furthest wilderness after the strayed lost lamb,—Jesus represents the call of God's grace, whose instrument in Israel He knows Himself to be (Luke xiv. 16–24; Matt. xxii. 1–16; Luke xv. 1–7; Matt. xviii. 12 f.). This call is, indeed, not addressed to all without distinction, "I am come to call sinners, not the righteous" (Mark ii. 17); nor do all those called reach the blessed goal to which they are called, "Many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. xxii. 16). This is not, however, a divine narrowness of heart or caprice which grants salvation only to some, not to all, but rests on that mutual relation of human freedom and divine grace which we have just established as the presupposition of Jesus' whole doctrine of salvation. If Jesus does not call the righteous, the reason immediately follows: the whole, that is, those who do not feel themselves sick, need not a physician, they have only to recognise themselves as sick, and He will be at their service also. And as to those in the Parable of the Feast (Matt. xxii. 1 f.), who are called, indeed, but not chosen, the parable itself illustrates most clearly that

their not being chosen, that is, not admitted to the enjoyment of the marriage feast, is not the fault of the inviting king, who rather does everything to share the goods of his house with as many as possible, but is entirely the fault of the invited, who either do not accept the invitation, or do not observe the necessary conventions of a king's house. The notion of being elected, therefore, does not contain the result of a onesided decree of God, but a mutual working of human and divine conduct. God chooses those who make it possible for Him to choose them. The preliminary conditions of an effectual call and final election are given in the introduction to the Sermon on the Mount, as well as in the Parable of the Sower. While the original introduction to the Sermon on the Mount, with its beatitudes and woes, fixes the attractive and repellent effect which the preaching of the kingdom of heaven has hitherto had, it marks the members of the kingdom in the poor in spirit, the sorrowing, those hungering for righteousness and suffering for its sake, the quiet, hidden, true Israel.<sup>1</sup> These are the real characteristics of need and longing, in one word, of susceptibility, to which the kingdom, with its gifts, is promised. But this susceptibility must be an earnest one, a hungering and thirsting for righteousness, a capacity for suffering for righteousness' sake, that is, a state of heart which really puts the highest value on righteousness, this key to the kingdom of God. The Parable of the Sower, in another form, but in the same sense, describes this fundamental condition of susceptibility. Not only must the heart be opened to the divine, but it must be opened to its depths, to the

<sup>1</sup> The original introduction of the Sermon on the Mount may be seen more pure in Luke than in Matthew, who here also has attempted an enlargement by similar expressions of Jesus from other quarters. According to this, the beatification of positive virtues, such as mercy, purity of heart, and peace-making, is foreign to the original connection, and there remains only the attribute of susceptibility for salvation. The mourning, meek, hungering and thirsting are only different forms of the idea of "poor in spirit." As to this fundamental idea, the *τεχνία*, which, by a true interpretation, answers the *πτωχοί* of Luke from the purely secular sphere, is not to be explained as poor in the Divine Spirit, for all men are that by nature, and there is nothing blessed in that. But it means poor in heart, inwardly poor, and is, according to Isa. lxi. 1, lxii. 2, synonymous with contrite in spirit, that is, in need of, and longing for salvation.

foundation of will underlying the surface of feeling; and it must not merely half resign itself to the divine, but entirely, and with singleness of mind. Then God can, not merely begin, but accomplish His work in it; not merely call, but also choose the man, and faithfully keep him as His chosen, so that no power on earth can pluck him out of His hand (cf. Matt. xxiv. 22, 24). All this does not mean that it is a matter of man's own power to set up in himself these pre-conditions of being called and chosen, nor that where they are wanting there is no further hope for the man. When Jesus sorrowfully learns that the rich young man was not yet sufficiently "poor in spirit" to burst the bands of worldly riches, that he was able to receive the seed of the word with joy, but not to pluck the thorns of worldly pleasure from his heart, He startles His disciples with the apparently hopeless statement: "Sooner may a camel go through the eye of a needle, than a rich man enter into the kingdom of God." But He immediately modifies it with the weighty words: "With man it is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Mark x. 27; Matt. xix. 26; Luke xviii. 27); that is, man cannot break these fetters, but God can—not by an irresistible operation of grace, but by life experiences, which make these iron bands fall from him. The word has undoubtedly a significance reaching far beyond this particular case; and even the disciples, in their "Who then can be saved?" have generalised the individual case. Jesus ascribes to His heavenly Father a moral power overlapping the free human self-determination,—a power of freely establishing in it the conditions on which He can bestow His grace,—a power, as we may see in the case of the rich young man, that is not constraining, but rather emancipating. Certainly Jesus presupposes an ascendancy of grace, but neither here nor elsewhere a determinism. Even the names of the disciples being written in heaven (Luke x. 20) is no predestination. The expression sprang from the custom of having in the cities a register of citizens, in which the living citizens stood, but the dead were blotted out; therefore, in Rev. iii. 5, mention is also made of the possible blotting out of a name from the book of life. The expression therefore, no doubt, signifies being entered on the roll of heavenly citizens, that is a personal assurance of salva-

tion, but not one that may not be lost, and therefore, also, not one that, when gained, is beyond reach of question. Again, when Jesus (Mark iv. 11, 12) passes judgment on the opposite relation of His disciples and the multitude to the word of God, "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God; but to them all things are communicated in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest they may be converted and forgiven," He certainly establishes a twofold influence of God; in the one case, an enlightening, in the other a hardening one; but even the latter is neither unmerited nor irrevocable. The point in both cases here is rather the applicability of the rule, expressed in the same connection, of the mutual working between God and the human heart: "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away, even that which he hath." To the disciples it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, because they had sufficient susceptibility and spiritual sense to inquire about the meaning of the parables (ver. 10). To the people it was denied, because this spiritual mind and inquiry were wanting. But that does not mean that the same might not yet arise in them; for at that very hour Jesus is training His disciples to send them to this very people, in the assurance that a great harvest of God is to be gathered from among them (Matt. ix. 35-38).

#### § 4. THE WAY OF SALVATION. CONVERSION AND FORGIVENESS

In consonance with the same law of the reciprocal action of freedom and grace which we see here, two further results of the call, which condition one another, come into operation in Jesus' scheme of salvation: the change of mind and the forgiveness of sin. The *μετάνοια* is the first word in the preaching of the kingdom of heaven, and remains, from beginning to end of the gospel, the subjective fundamental condition of sharing in the kingdom (Mark i. 15, vi. 13; Matt. xi. 21; Luke xxiv. 47). It is not so much penance in the judicial or old Church sense of the word, but, as the

word says, change of mind, conversion (*ἐπιστρέψεως*, Matt. xiii. 15). It is that thorough inward conversion, when the man turns from the world and sin to God and His holy will, a renewal from the bottom of the heart, which first creates a right disposition, the root of all particular right actions, and thus, as it were, in germ satisfies the righteous demands of the kingdom of God. To this element of salvation on the human side, corresponds the forgiveness of sins on the side of God. Though in His early preaching, of which we have so few verbal specimens, Jesus does not explicitly give such prominence to the watchword of forgiveness as that of change of mind, yet there can be no doubt that it formed an essential and, as it were, self-evident element of His preaching. The text of His sermon at Nazareth (Luke iv. 18) indicates it, and His whole activity among publicans and sinners presupposes it (cf. Luke vii. 47, 48). It is included in the refreshment *ἀνάπαυσις τῆς ψυχῆς*, which He promises (Matt. xi. 28) to the weary and heavy laden, that is, those vainly striving after righteousness, and sighing under the burden of the law and a sense of guilt. Nay, it is contained, as a matter of course, in the glad message of the kingdom of heaven being at hand. For not only was it a definite and standing promise of the prophets that the Messianic kingdom would begin with a great remission of guilt, granted by God to His people, but this lay in the very nature of the coming kingdom itself. How could the holy God have intercourse with His people without at the same time bringing pardon to them for all that had accumulated to separate between them? How then are the two introductory conditions of the kingdom related to one another? That a connection and mutual relation may be looked for here is evident, not only from the first preaching of Jesus (Matt. iv. 18), which at bottom comprehends both the demand and the promise, but from the very nature of the case, *μετάνοια*, the breaking in principle with sin and the divine remission of it must be mutually conditioned. In a certain sense this divine remission will, of course, necessarily precede the human conversion. For, as sin surrounds man not only morally, as a false tendency of the will, but also religiously, as guilt before God, which makes him shun His presence with the fear of an evil conscience, how could a true

*μετάνοια*—that is, a turning of the heart to God—take place, unless met by a gracious offer of divine pardon? Therefore Jesus (Mark i. 15) adds to His *μετανοίει* the *καὶ πιστεύει* *ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ*. Without the gospel of grace, and the trust in God which it awakens, the people could not possibly be converted to God. And there is confirmation here in the *μετάνοια* of what we said above of being poor in spirit, that it is no mere legal demand, but is at the same time wrought by the grant of salvation. From the relation of grace and freedom that runs through His doctrine of salvation, Jesus can consider it just as much an action of God on the sinner as a decided act of the man himself. At one time it is set forth as the act of the shepherd going after the sheep that was lost, at another time it is set forth as the act of the lost son who rises up and returns to his father, trusting in his goodness of heart. But then it is well to note that this forgiveness, announced and offered beforehand, is not as yet one personally adjudged. It is offered and assured on the part of God, but not yet received on the part of man, not yet appropriated by him. That only takes place on the ground of *μετάνοια*. The lost son must first come to himself and return to his Father ere he can be certain of forgiveness, and be a partaker thereof. The publican must first beat penitently on his breast, and turn with all his heart from sin to God, before he can go down to his house justified (Luke xviii. 13, 14). And so, in virtue of Jesus' direction, the whole apostolic Church has preached *μετάνοιαν εἰς ἀφεσιν ἀμαρτιῶν*, repentance and conversion, as a precondition of the actual personal forgiveness of sin (Luke xxiv. 47; Acts ii. 38; cf. Mark i. 4). That God forgives the sinner who turns to Him, but only him who turns, this unquestionable doctrine of the prophets and the psalms, was at bottom self-evident to Jesus. But, with the view of setting aside misconceptions, and especially for the understanding of the subsequent Pauline doctrine of justification, it is well to establish it here expressly. The doctrine of the Apostle Paul is different in point of form. He speaks of faith where Jesus speaks of conversion, and instead of forgiveness of sin he speaks rather of justification,—that is, a declaration of righteousness, an acquittal of the sinner,—an idea and expression which Jesus only once applies

in a similar way (Luke xviii. 14). The saving transaction, however, described by both is essentially the same. It may perhaps seem strange to us that the idea of faith, which the apostolic preaching has made so familiar and so important to us, does not stand out in the teaching of Jesus beside that of repentance. Only once or twice in the Synoptics (Mark ix. 42; Matt. xviii. 6) do we find the phrase "believe in me"; and this isolation suggests the conjecture that it has been introduced into the words of Jesus here from the later phraseology of the Church. But yet this putting of the demand for faith in the background, which is connected with a historical circumstance to be alluded to immediately, the circumstance that His person seems only gradually to the Lord Himself to have come to the central place in His doctrine of salvation, is only of a formal nature. Belief in God's grace is self-evidently the other side of repentance. Jesus, as already mentioned, requires faith in the gospel as a matter of course (Mark i. 15), without which the glad message to men could have no effect at all. Jesus has further claimed faith for His heavenly Father and His love (Mark ix. 42, xv. 32); and how would it have been possible to avoid extending this trust to Him who was indeed the revelation of this Father, and the personal surety of His love? The conduct of those who sought His help, to whom He says so often "thy faith hath saved thee," is at bottom a faith in Christ, though in a most elementary form; and when Jesus afterwards presupposes a combined confession of, and praying in, His name on the part of the disciples (Matt. x. 32, xviii. 20), or when He calls on men to receive Him, or come to Him in order to learn of Him or allow themselves to be guided by Him (Matt. xi. 28-30), it cannot be denied that the only thing wanting here is the formal expression *πιστεύειν εἰς χριστόν*, the idea and requirement of a personal trustful attachment to Him being present throughout. We have the clearest evidence of the identity of repentance and faith in the narrative of the woman who was a sinner (Luke vii. 36 f.), the forgiveness of whose sin Jesus establishes and confirms with the words: "Thy faith hath saved thee."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> That the forgiveness of sin in this narrative is not based on love, as one constantly hears even from Protestant theologians, is evident. For

### § 5. THE WAY OF SALVATION. SONSHIP AND SANCTIFICATION

The immediate fruit of forgiveness, received on the ground of repentance and faith, is, according to the teaching of Jesus, sonship with God. It represents, in some respects, a restoration to an original but lost condition, such as is exemplified in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. For God is in Himself Father, and therefore man is meant and fitted to be His child; but only he who from the heart has turned to God, and received forgiveness, can know and feel himself to be His child. Accordingly, Jesus does not ascribe to all men, or to all Israelites, the divine adoption (or sonship, Matt. v. 45), but only to His disciples. He does so by speaking to them again and again of "your Father," and giving them the right to pray: "Our Father in heaven." In conformity with the two-fold ground of this relation, which rests on change of mind and on forgiveness, Jesus now deduces from it the most blessed rights of children, as well as the most earnest obligations of children. As to the first: it relieves His disciples from all earthly care, which their heavenly Father takes upon Himself (Matt. vi. 25 f.). It places them in the least detail of life under the fatherly providence of God, without whose will not a hair of their head will be injured (Matt. x. 30). It gives them the right to pray for the forgiveness of the debts in which they are being constantly involved, and for defence against the temptations which are ever afresh threatening them. It introduces them into the most cordial relation of confidence and prayer to a Father in heaven, who—much more faithful than an earthly father—will never give them a stone instead of bread (Matt. vii. 9 f.). But as these filial rights, at the same time, pass of themselves into filial duties—into the duty of not losing faith, but of continuing to pray, seek, knock (Mark xi. 22 f.; Matt. vii. 7 f.)—of not praying if, according to ver. 4, the much or little love is the effect of the rich or meagre forgiveness received, it cannot possibly at the same time be thought of as the cause. According to this, the λίγα σοι, αφίεται αἱ τέρης αἱ ἀμερτλαὶ αἱ τολλαὶ, ὅτι ἡγάπησιν πολύ, would have to be thus expounded. Her sins must be forgiven her, for she can show the effects of that forgiveness. She has shown Me much grateful love. The following words, φόβος αὐτῆς αφίεται, δίκαιος αὐτῆς, confirm this causal relation of forgiveness and love.

for forgiveness from God without promising forgiveness towards our debtors (Matt. vi. 14, 15), of not praying for deliverance from temptation without watching against falling into temptation (Matt. xxvi. 41); so He requires them to evince their divine sonship by the moral imitation of their heavenly Father (Matt. v. 45), and recognises no one as His brother or sister, that is, as a child of God, save those who do the will of His Father in heaven (Mark iii. 35; Luke xi. 28). Looked at from this side, the divine sonship, which is on the one hand a blessed possession, presents itself on the other as an ideal which is yet to be realised, as the infinite task of being perfect as the Father in heaven is perfect (*ὅπως γένησθε υἱοί, καὶ λαβήσητε τὴν αὐτοῦ δόξαν*, Matt. v. 45, 48); and so there is an absolute idea of the divine sonship which is only realised in the completed kingdom, in the resurrection and glorification of the perfected righteous (Luke xx. 36). The work of salvation, therefore, is by no means finished with the fundamental work of conversion and forgiveness done once for all, but behind the narrow gate of entrance lies the steep path of sanctification, which leads to life only at the high goal of perfection (Matt. vii. 14). It is to His disciples, to the children of God, that Jesus unfolds those heights and depths of that new doctrine of righteousness which estimates anger as murder, and the unchaste look as adultery. And no grace once received defends a man against the constantly possible misuse of freedom, a ruinous unfaithfulness, which by turning grace to licentiousness necessitates its recall (Matt. xviii. 23 f., xxv. 14–30; Luke xix. 11–27). Yet Jesus could say of His training of His own in righteousness: “My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.” Salvation when experienced is a power of God stirring in the man, which makes its ever higher requirements easier of fulfilment. If man, transformed inwardly by the renewing of his mind, is changed from a corrupt into a good tree, he will also naturally bear good fruit (Matt. vii. 18). He who has received forgiveness has experienced a love that wins the heart, and love experienced, kindles grateful love in return, and in this is found the highest incitement to the fulfilling of all divine commandments (Luke vii. 47). So that in keeping with the law which we have observed throughout of the co-operation of freedom and grace, human faithfulness is

indeed claimed at every step towards perfection (Luke xii. 42), and yet the divine faithfulness has taken the lost but recovered lamb upon its shoulders, and now bears it homeward by its strength (Luke xv. 5).

#### § 6. MEANS OF SALVATION, WORD AND MIRACLE

What then are Jesus' means of salvation, the revealed facts of the kingdom by which these effects are to be brought about? If all signs are not deceptive, a gradual development of the teaching of Jesus in reference to this matter took place, as He repeatedly brings new points of view to light in the experience thrust upon Him in His public life.<sup>1</sup> If we deny this progress, as there is still a prevalent disposition to do, owing to the force of dogmatic custom, and assume that from the very first as at the last, with the same consciousness throughout, He connected salvation with His person and His death of sacrifice, then we make His preaching, as it lies before us in the Synoptists, not only unintelligible but untrue, for He would then have thought and taught differently. Not that Jesus had ever to correct Himself in His doctrine of salvation, or to give up a standpoint which He had taken, but He had repeatedly to complete and merge the preceding view in a higher and deeper. First and above all—and this cannot be denied—He considered the word of glad tidings as the essential means of salvation, and thankfully welcomed, in connection with it, the miracles granted by the Father, as supporting and confirming His preaching (Matt. xi. 2–6), yet without regarding them as absolutely necessary. The word, the testimony of what was in Him, flowing from the depth of His consciousness, was indeed the simplest form of the revelation, and the most indispensable—since all revelations of God to man must reckon on being understood ere they can be operative, and cannot be at all believed without being understood (Matt. xiii. 11, xix. 51; Luke viii. 12). The prophets who appeared before Him had been equipped with the word as the one means of salvation, and He had something mightier to say than Jonah or Solomon (Matt. xii. 41, 42). He appears therefore with the unmistakable assurance of being

<sup>1</sup> Cf. my *Leben Jesu*, i. 231 and 351 ff.

able to convert and save His people by the preaching of the gospel. He knows Himself as anointed and sent to preach (Luke iv. 18), and still at a later period of His public life He demands of His contemporaries that they repent at His mere preaching, without signs and wonders, as the people of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah (Matt. xii. 41 f.; Luke xi. 29 f.). And how should He not? His word was the word of the living God, the glad tidings that the kingdom of heaven had come near, the setting forth of the eternal love of the Father in heaven; and it was confirmed by its agreement with the law and prophets, by the fulfilling of the deepest needs of the human heart, and by the divine fruits which it produced wherever it found a good lodgment. Above all, the Parable of the Sower, the significant firstling of His parables of the kingdom, unfolds to us the ideas of Jesus of the saving power of the word. The word of the kingdom is like a good seed. As there is a wonderful power of life latent in a seed, an entire life development, so in the word of God there is the creative power and development of the new life from God which the human heart needs. It now, of course, depends on the nature of the soil, that is, the heart, whether this seed is to develop its nature and power or not. As the seed which fell by the wayside, or on stony ground, or among thorns, did not from the first, or at least in the end, come to anything, so the productive power of the new life, wherever it is met by stupidity, frivolity, or worldliness, is frustrated from the first, or after a transient effect, or even after a partial success. But in some, at least, the divine word germinates, and not only germinates, but throws out roots and forms ears, and so finally brings forth the fruits of a life from God, thirty, sixty, and an hundredfold (Mark iv. 3 f.; Matt. xiii. 3 f., 18 f.; Luke viii. 4 f.). The disciples were the living evidences of the truth of this parable. In them germinated and grew a new life, which He could compare with new wine which should not be put in old bottles (Mark ii. 22), and so He could see in this disciple community as He does in the further Parable of the Seed field (Mark iv. 26-29), and of the Tares among the Wheat (Matt. xiii. 34 f.), a planting of God from which will at last proceed the great harvest of the completed kingdom of God. And on this sowing of the word there came the miracles granted Him

by God like the rain which blesses and the sunshine. They certainly could not beget the change of mind and faith in the heart which the word does. But they might awaken and nourish the latent germ of the spiritual life, and so they were vouchsafed to faith however weak, while the unbelief that requires a sign was referred to Moses and the prophets (Luke xvi. 31), or to the signs of the times, or the sign of the prophet Jonas, that is, to the God-sent preacher of repentance and judgment (Mark viii. 12). Those miracles of Jesus were works of love for His contemporaries, intended to make His earnest prophetic words more impressive (Matt. xi. 20-24); a condescension to the weakness of men who commonly felt more deeply their sensuous than their spiritual need, but to whom the sense of spiritual need and desire for help might arise in the sensible experience of help and love. Still more in their universally compassionate character, removing, through the power of God, the manifold evil and misery of the world, they were the dawning rays of that day when the kingdom of God will dry up all tears, and glorify even the natural life, and therefore they were a testimony in fact to the truth of the kingdom as come near to those who still took offence at the testimony of the word (Matt. xi. 5, xii. 28).

#### § 7. THE PERSONAL MEDIATOR OF SALVATION

It lay in the nature of the case, however, that these miraculous signs should not only attach men in trust and gratitude to the person of Jesus, but that the effect of the word should prove to depend upon a personal relation to Him. For, as we have repeatedly urged, every guarantee for the truth of the gospel lay in Him, in His personal certainty of God and communion with God, and therefore He Himself as the real mediator of salvation, stood behind the word as a means of grace from the very first, though for a long time undeclared. We get the impression that Jesus, wholly devoted to His divine mission, and seeking only the glory of His heavenly Father, for a long time allowed this saving significance of His personality to prevail without any desire of His and without reasoning about it, and that the full consciousness of the degree in which participation in the kingdom of God depends

upon surrender to Him, first came to Him through experience, through the opposition of the world. If we are not mistaken, this development of His consciousness of being Saviour comes into prominence, above all, in the much-discussed passage, Matt. xi. 25-30. Jesus has gained the new experience that the glad message committed to Him is hidden from the wise and prudent of His people, while it is revealed to the un-educated, the babes. In taking thankfully from His Father's hands this experience, which, according to human ways of thought, is so depressing, it dawns on Him what a mystery of salvation the Father has prepared for the world in Him the Son, and how all knowledge of the Father is bound up in Him, and in His free revealing of it. "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever He will reveal Him." Why was the new revelation of God hidden from the wise and prudent, the scribes and teachers in Israel, and why was it revealed to His babes of disciples, these Galilean fishermen and peasants? Because the former took offence at Him, the meek and lowly Son of Man, and could not place confidence in Him; while, to the latter, love for Him became daily the leading means of knowledge. From this hour, therefore, commences a new tone in the teaching of Jesus, who, in a way till then unusual, places Himself in the central point of His doctrine of salvation: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly of heart: and ye shall find rest to your souls." That is a tone which is usually called the Johannine, because it certainly is much more strongly emphasised in the Fourth Gospel from the very beginning, but it also makes itself heard in the Synoptists from this point. "He who receiveth you, receiveth Me; and he who receiveth Me, receiveth Him that sent Me" (Matt. x. 40). "Whosoever confesseth Me before men, him will I also confess before My heavenly Father" (Matt. x. 32; Luke xii. 8). "He that is not for Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad" (Matt. xii. 30). "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20). In

these and like words already emerges, as Jesus' own idea, the thought which afterwards ruled the whole apostolic teaching, that the attitude of man to the person of Jesus absolutely decides his relation to God. The decisive significance of His personality, in the setting up of the kingdom of God, forces itself on the Messiah from another side in that same middle period of His public life. His Pharisaic opponents attempted to destroy the impression of His healing the possessed, by tracing it back to a covenant with Beelzebub, the prince of demons. By so doing, they woke in Him the majestic consciousness of being rather the personal conqueror of Satan, the destroyer in principle of the kingdom of darkness. "How can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man himself?" (Mark iii. 27; Matt. xii. 29; Luke xi. 21). His power, therefore, of spoiling the prince of darkness of his prey—the possessed—rests upon His having first overcome him in personal combat,—without doubt an allusion to the conflict of temptation in the wilderness, in which He had preferred the self-denying path of absolute obedience to God to all the allurements of the world-spirit, and so first obtained for Himself the power of breaking the world-dominion of evil. The consciousness of being the Conqueror and Dethroner of Satan comes into prominence also on other occasions. "I saw Satan fall as lightning from heaven." "I have given you power to tread on scorpions and serpents, and all the powers of the enemy: and nothing shall injure you," He declares to His disciples (Luke x. 18, 19) when they had returned with rich results from their mission. The destruction of the kingdom of Satan is the necessary other side of the setting up of the kingdom of God. And it is possible to others only through Him who in a personal life-struggle defeats every onset of the old evil enemy, and has indeed in principle overcome him from the first.

#### § 8. THE SAVING SIGNIFICANCE OF HIS DEATH

These very considerations, which are obscurely indicated in the synoptic tradition, lead to a still more definite unfolding of Jesus' ideas of salvation, to the idea of the founding of

salvation by means of His death. The personal Mediator of salvation must crown His work by giving up His life for it. That is an idea with which Jesus did not begin, an idea which must have been hidden from Him so long as the possibility of calling His people to repentance, by the word of the glad tidings, was not actually disproved. It is an idea which He reaches, too, through the experience from which, as in Matt. xi. 25, He learns His Father's will. That conflict and victory at the gate of entrance to His Messiahship had probably been decisive for Himself, but not yet quite decisive for His work. Whatever powers and triumphs for the kingdom of God His official life at its height might secure, the powers of darkness gathered themselves together all the stronger against it, and made it clear that the last, hardest, and decisive combat was yet to come. An ever darker hatred was being developed in the leading circles of the people against Him who brought salvation. World - ruling selfishness with demoniac power appeared against the divine love with its joyful message, resolved in self-preservation to lay murderous hands on the messenger of God. The great mass of Israel, however, held by sensuous Messianic expectations, and not at all comprehending His spiritual ideas of salvation, wavered back and forwards irresolutely between Him and His deadly enemies. And even the few faithful ones whom He had gained, how weak and dependent, and how bound up in those worldly and selfish expectations they still were. Amid these impressions and experiences, in the death which lay threateningly before Him, in His situation as a man, Jesus prophetically laid hold of, and ever more clearly perceived, a decree of His heavenly Father—a decree that He should accomplish by dying what He had only been permitted to prepare for by living; and thus towards the end of His life we have declarations about the saving significance of His death. He could not indeed develop in formal teaching to His disciples an idea of God after the understanding of which He had yet himself to strive, and which again became doubtful on the threshold of its realisation in Gethsemane. He could only utter it in hints and presentiments like a prophet, and therefore it need not surprise us that it lies before us only in a few short and obscure sayings. It was written of the servant of Jehovah

(Isa. liii.): "When he hath made his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands." Correspondingly, we meet, in the words of Jesus (Luke xii. 49, 50), with the idea that He had to expect the full results of that which He desired on earth only beyond His earthly life, after a baptism of blood that is at hand: "I am come to send fire on the earth (that is, a power of purifying separation; cf. ver. 51 f.); and what will I if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with;<sup>1</sup> and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!" That, however, expresses only the fact of the necessity for dying, not the reason for it. This reason is given in Mark x. 45; Matt. xx. 28: "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many"—δῶναι τὴν φυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν. This solitary saying has, of course, tormented many who seek to force upon it all their preconceived doctrinal opinions about the death of Jesus. Simplicity of interpretation, the analogy of Scripture, and especially the agreement with Jesus' mode of thought elsewhere, must decide. The idea of ransom presupposes those who are not free, who are captive or enslaved, and who are to be set free by means of it. It may be asked, who or what is to be thought of as the power which holds them captive or in bondage? On the basis of Old Testament passages such as Ps. xlix. 9, Job xxxiii. 24, redemption from death has been thought of, and this has been brought into connection with Matt. xvi. 27, in which Jesus represents the impossibility for a man who has wasted his soul on the vain and transitory, of buying it back even at the price of the whole world.<sup>2</sup> But these passages have nothing to do, either with each other, or with the one in question. Those Old Testament passages speak (poetically) of a ransom to be given to God, in order that a man may not die—in the usual sense of the word die. But whenever the New Testament considers the life or blood of Christ as a

<sup>1</sup> Baptism as an image of dying—as sinking into a watery grave—is a symbol bound up with the original form of immersion, which we have also in Mark x. 38, 39; Rom. vi. 3-5.

<sup>2</sup> So Ritschl (*Rechtf. u. Versöhnung*, ii. 84), and after him Weiss (*N. T. Theol.* p. 74).

ransom, it does not think of a redemption from temporal death, which has not been removed from us by the death of Jesus, nor of a payment to God, as though we were to be bought off from Him, but of a being purchased for God, that is, of a being set free from the bonds of a power hostile to God (1 Cor. vi. 20, vii. 23; 1 Pet. i. 18; Rev. i. 5, v. 9). And Jesus (Matt. xvi. 27) speaks of the inability of a man whose life has been given up to the world regaining his freedom at the last day (ver. 28): But for those who have selfishly given themselves up to the world, and therefore appear at the last day as lost, Jesus has not given His life a ransom. Such learned combinations, as usual, overlook the simplest and most natural interpretation. The New Testament, as well as the Old, is familiar with the notion of bondage to sin, of being sold into the slavery of sin (John viii. 34; Rom. vii. 14; cf. 1 Kings xxi. 20, 25; 1 Macc. i. 15), and also of the loosening of these slave bonds, and deliverance from the inherited power of sinful behaviour, or the service of sin in all sorts of unrighteousness. It repeatedly uses the word *λυτροῦσθαι* when it speaks of the saving operation of the death or blood of Christ, 1 Pet. i. 18; Tit. ii. 14 (cf. *ἀγοράζειν*, Rev. i. 5, v. 9). Jesus, when He promised, in order to complete His service of self-denying love for the world, to give His life a ransom for many, must also have thought of the worst and most real misery and bondage in which man finds himself, that is, not of death, nor even of mere guilt, but of the bondage of sin. The context throughout favours this. While the idea of bondage to guilt or to death is remote from the special occasion of the words, the prayer of the sons of Zebedee for the place of honour in His kingdom, Jesus must have thought of the bonds of selfishness and worldly pleasure which, as that desire of His favourites betrayed, still clung to even the best and most pious, and He may have expressed the hope that these bands would at length be broken by His approaching death. The cords which still bound His own to the world which was about to slay Him must be finally broken by His death upon the cross, so that, in the words of Paul, the world from that moment was crucified to them, and they to the world. The traditional doctrine of vicarious satisfaction, as may be readily conceived, is imported into

these words the more confidently, that it for once finds here the indispensable *ávti* peculiar to it, which is wanting in almost all the rest of the New Testament. That *ávti* is best explained by the image of redemption from slavery needs no discussion, as the ransom is surely given in place of those whom the Master and Owner has to emancipate in return for it. On the other hand, Jesus cannot have thought of paying the debt of death due by others by enduring death for them, because by the presupposition that God neither can nor will be gracious or forgive without a *λύτρον*, He would have destroyed everything He had up till then taught of the free grace of God, and the forgiveness which depends only on the sinner's return.

#### § 9. DOCTRINAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

The richest, most many-sided, and therefore, of course, the most difficult utterance on the saving significance of His death, was given by Jesus on the threshold of the death itself in the institution of the Supper (Matt. xxvi. 26–28; Mark xiv. 22–24; Luke xxii. 19, 20; 1 Cor. xi. 23–35). In speaking here of His body being given or broken,<sup>1</sup> and His blood shed for many (or as Paul and Luke have it, “for you”), He at anyrate characterises His death as something for the advantage of His own. For His body, an image and vessel of His life, and His blood, in the biblical view a seal and bearer of His life, are simply the solemn double expression for the personal life which He surrenders to the death of violence, and the *ἵπερ πολλῶν* or *ὑμῶν* is no *ávti*, instead of, but for the advantage, for the good of. Thus *εἰς ἀφεσιν ἀμαρτιῶν*, which is added by Matthew only, is an interpretation not incorrect,—as will be shown,—but to be referred simply to the opinion of the evangelist. Jesus Himself explains the asserted blessing of His death more comprehen-

<sup>1</sup> I do not believe that the *κλάμενον* after *ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν* in 1 Cor. xi. 24 is not genuine. The mere *τὸ αἷμα μου τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν* would be unnaturally compressed; and if the participle were a gloss, the copyist would have supplemented from Luke the word *διδόμενον*, but would not have put the original *κλάμενον*.

sively by a twofold allusion—first to the Passover meal whose type appears specially in the breaking of bread and in the words “this is my body,” then to the sacrifice of the covenant at Sinai, to which reference is made in the words uttered in handing the cup, “this is My blood of the covenant” (or as Paul paraphrases, “this is the new covenant in My blood”). Let us trace both references, not forgetting that as allusions and, at the same time, diverse allusions, for the explanation of one and the same institution, they are not to be pursued beyond the real outstanding points of comparison. The Passover signified exemption, that is, forgiveness and deliverance for those who, though as worthy of death as the Egyptians, had an atonement in the blood of the lamb of sacrifice,—an atonement because they had eaten the body of this lamb, and so appropriated the sacrifice. Jesus in offering His body, about to be broken in the symbol of the unleavened bread, as food to be appropriated by His disciples, expresses the idea that His life given up to death (but not abiding in death) must be inwardly appropriated and become food for their inner life, and that thus His surrender to death may serve for their reconciliation, their forgiveness and deliverance. This symbolic action certainly ascribes a saving significance to His death in itself as an actual surrender of life. But it does so only because there is saving significance in the life which passes through death, and which can only become the spiritual food of the disciples, the bread of life to be appropriated by them, if it does not perish in death. So that alongside of the idea of death, we are to see here also that of resurrection, the glorification of His life—which is then to be inwardly communicated to His own. As to the allusion to the sacrifice by which the covenant was ratified at Sinai, we have to consider in it, first, the Mosaic ordinance (*Ex. xxiv.*), and then also the prophecy of Jeremiah of a new covenant (*Jer. xxxi. 31–34*). For it is clear that Jesus in calling His blood, the blood of the covenant, thinks—even if He does not use the words *τῆς καινῆς*—of that predicted new covenant which is to be ratified by the shedding of His blood, just as the old covenant at Sinai by the blood of sacrifice with which Moses sprinkled the people at the solemn close of the act of institution. Now it should be noted that this

blood sprinkling does not introduce but concludes the whole founding of the covenant. It takes place only when God has completed His revelation, and the people have made the solemn declaration: "All the words which the Lord hath spoken we will do" (Ex. xxiv. 3). It is not, therefore, the foundation or the possibility, but the ratification of the Sinaitic covenant; and if it signified, as no doubt it did, a purifying of the people as they entered into communion with God,<sup>1</sup> this purifying stands in the same relation to the people's vow of obedience as the divine forgiveness in the baptism of John, or the teaching of Jesus stands to the human change of mind. If, then, Jesus compares His offering of Himself with the sacrifice of the covenant, He cannot mean that the new covenant of grace and forgiveness is first founded or rendered possible by His dying, that the grace of the Father in heaven is only now secured. He can only mean that the new covenant is ratified by His dying; that is, that for those who sincerely enter into the covenant the grace of God the Father, and the forgiveness of sin which that involves, is to be sealed by His death as the pledge. And this certainly justifies Matthew's *eis ἄφεσιν ἀμαρτιῶν*, but it does not express the full sense of ὑπὲρ πολλῶν or ὑμῶν. For as the reference to the Passover in the first saying of Jesus suggests that the sacrificial death of Christ was not

<sup>1</sup> Wendt, *Lehre Jesu*, 519, denies, of course, to the sacrifice of the covenant any relation to the sin of the people. But that is against all biblical views and all biblical theology. Cf. Heb. ix. 19-22. Reihm, *Lehrbegriff des Hebræerbriebs*, p. 500, and Oehler, *O. T. Theology*, pp. 407, 408. Wendt goes still further, and denies to the thought of Jesus about His death, expressed in the institution of the Supper, any relation to purification (*Lehre Jesu*, p. 522),—a somewhat daring contradiction to the exposition which the apostolic age and the whole of Christendom to this day have given to the words "for you." What better has Wendt to put in place of this exposition? "Jesus in the words at the Supper characterised in so far the saving significance (of His death) by regarding His death as an act noble in the sight of God and moving God, to maintain His promised saving communion, and to confer His salvation on the disciples" (p. 520). Thus the God and Father of Jesus Christ, who is the very eternal love and faithfulness, after He had revealed His kingdom and salvation, must, in the view of Jesus, be moved by a noble act to maintain and confer that salvation. The doctrinal tradition of the Church is surely not improved by such discoveries.

merely for the purpose of reconciling the covenant people of the New Testament, but chiefly for the purpose of helping them to make their own the life which was to be given up for them in order that it might become food of a new life, and so might secure to them reconciliation and deliverance in the day of judgment, so must it be also in the second words of institution. For the new covenant, according to Jer. xxxi. 31-34, is not merely a covenant of forgiveness, but first and foremost it is a covenant of inward transformation, of regeneration,—I will put my law in their heart, and write it in their mind,—and only in the second place a covenant of forgiveness and justification (ver. 34). And so Jesus also by calling the blood that is to be shed, the blood of a covenant, the sacrificial blood of a new covenant, found the saving result of His dying first of all in the production of a new life in God, and only in connection with that did He relate it to the assurance of the forgiveness of sin. Whether in both cases He desired to apply to the shedding of His blood, the ideas of atonement that were certainly contained in the Old Testament rites referred to, can hardly be made out, as no express word points to that. But even this element of thought would be altogether compatible with what we have already found. For if Jesus attributed to His sacrificial death the power of breaking sin in many and begetting in them a new life, and in connection with this the assurance of divine forgiveness, then His offering of Himself was a true atonement, that is, a reparation, an abolition of sin before God in the objective as well as the subjective sense. In the objective, by outweighing and removing the sin of many before God; not certainly in the legal sense of bearing the punishment they deserved, but in the far better dynamic sense of a power to remove sin in many, and thus efface it in the eyes of God, who no longer imputes the broken and uprooted sin. And in the subjective sense, by giving to the converted man the perfect assurance that God does not impute sin,—an assurance for which the Saviour's life was pledged, and which, as Paul says, filled him with the assurance that, "He who spared not His own Son, but gave Him up to death for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32).

### § 10. CONCLUDING REMARKS

If, on the basis of all this, we bring together the ideas of salvation which Jesus connects with His offering of Himself, we find that He ascribes saving significance now to His death in itself and now to His dying as a necessary passage to a glorified life. The two are not only not contradictory, but together they give a full, living, and satisfactory view, which again is in harmony with all the former testimonies to His idea of salvation. His death in itself will, according to Mark x. 45, Matt. xx. 28, certainly burst the bands which still hold captive in worldliness even the best, but it will only do so for those in whom His life has already taken root, and only after the completed break with the world will it freely unfold itself. His death, according to Matt. xxvi. 28, will be the seal of a divine forgiveness of sin which finally quiets all doubt of the divine grace, arising from a consciousness of guilt. But it will only be this to those who—as the whole institution of the Supper expresses—allow Him who died for them to live in them by their hearty acceptance of His life which was given for them. Thus conceived His declarations about His death harmonise with His whole preceding doctrine of salvation, and are a supplement and completion with which it cannot dispense. For, that the kingdom of heaven, that is, communion with God, has come near, is already guaranteed by the testimony of Jesus, much more so is it by His person, from the inner life of which this testimony springs. And yet this guarantee is incomplete until He has shown and perfected by His obedience to death His unity with God from which He derives that testimony. Again, the redeeming power which is at once a transforming and a justifying power lies in the gospel and its bearer; that power exists and is operative from the beginning. But it can only become effective and master the world when He who bears it has proved Himself to be absolute victor, even against the full muster of the powers of darkness, and has, at the same time, in this perfecting of victory, laid aside the limitations of space and time, and been transfigured into a universal principle of victory, a spiritual nature which can be communicated to men (1 Cor. xv. 45). If, on the other hand, we were forced to explain the obscure

utterances of Jesus in the traditional sense instead of this, that is, if we said heaven was first opened by the abstract fact of His death and forgiveness rendered possible, and the angry God transformed into a heavenly Father, it would be as great a contradiction of His whole preceding doctrine of salvation as could possibly be conceived. By that doctrine of His death everything would be given up of what He had before taught,—that the kingdom of heaven had come near, that there is a Father in heaven who forgives all the debts of His children, that there is a new birth from the seed of His word and a peace of soul under an easy yoke in following Him,—and that they are not future possibilities, but present realities. Nay, it would make His whole preceding active life worthless—and at bottom also the succeeding glorified life, which would have nothing further to contribute to salvation. There would then remain to biblical theology no other course than to regard those individual utterances of Jesus about His death as not genuine, and only put in the mouth of Jesus at a later period in opposition to the abundance of the contrary testimony. In doing so, however, we would transform into an inscrutable riddle the institution of the Supper, this most certain of all certain things that have been transmitted to us, and likewise the whole subsequent apostolic teaching about the Saviour's death.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Weiss, even in the last edition of his *New Testament Theology*, vol. i. p. 99, has sought to reconcile the fact that Jesus during His lifetime imparted to His disciples the forgiveness of sins as a present possession, with the doctrine that the redeeming death first procured it. Certainly he says, p. 102 : "The members of the kingdom, from the very fact that they are in the kingdom of God, are sure of the forgiving grace of God. But if the life-work of Jesus was the founding of the kingdom of God, and reached its climax in the surrender of His life, then this surrender was a necessary though extreme means for bringing those who had proved unsusceptible to the highest revelation of God's grace into that new relation to Himself which was to be set up in His kingdom." I confess that this solution of the riddle has remained obscure to me. Does it mean that the death of Jesus was necessary, not for those who already believed on Him in His lifetime, and therewith had already got forgiveness of sin (Mark ii. 5), but for the unbelieving multitude? But then Jesus must have said in the institution of the Supper that He would let His body be broken and His blood be shed for the unbelieving multitude, and not *ιντριψει μαρτυρισμόν*!

## CHAPTER VII

## THE CHURCH

## § 1. DISCIPLESHIP

The salvation brought into the world by Jesus does not act only on the individual man as such, but, as the fundamental watchword of the kingdom of God suggests, immediately calls forth a communion of men, a society which grows towards the likeness of the kingdom. For that which unites men with God as their Father, unites them also as brethren with one another, and that very thing which distinguishes them from the unredeemed world makes them also as a community "salt of the earth and light of the world." These natural laws of the kingdom of heaven were during His lifetime and in His hands realised in the simplest and freest form. In imitation of the old schools of the prophets and the schools of the scribes in His own day He gathered about Him a circle of disciples, which as His life grew more unsettled and homeless, assumed the character of a wandering family (Matt. viii. 18–22, x. 25). And He did so in order partly to confirm in their sense of citizenship those who had been won for the kingdom, and partly to make them instruments in spreading it, in order, as is said in Matt. xiii. 52, to make of them "scribes instructed in the kingdom of heaven." He did not impose this wandering life with Himself, and which the disciples shared, as a condition of salvation on all who desired to have part in the kingdom of heaven. Many of His friends, like the family at Bethany and some true adherents in Capernaum, He never called to follow Him, and in certain circumstances He expressly declined men's offers (Mark v. 18, 19); and in His later period of peril He advised all against following Him (Luke xiv. 25 f.; cf. Matt. viii. 18–20). But because His preaching could only take the form of instruction in daily and, as it were, domestic intercourse, supported by the whole power of personal association and example, it was certainly His desire to draw into His immediate society all whom their duties permitted (cf. Matt. viii. 21, 22; Luke ix.

59, 62; Mark x. 21). And just as His experience of the unripeness of the people deepened (Matt. ix. 35, 38), and He was able to look beyond the limits of His own day, this discipleship seemed more and more important to Him for the extension and continuance of His work. In order to have a permanent basis in the ever changing company of followers, He selected twelve to be ever with Him, so that their testimony about Him might be complete; and He appointed them from the very first, as it seems to find their life's mission in preaching the kingdom of heaven (Mark i. 17, iii. 14, 15). The number twelve undoubtedly referred to the twelve tribes of the nation, which they—either within His lifetime or after it—were to call into the kingdom of God (Matt. xix. 28), and accordingly the name apostles or messengers, by which the early Church from the beginning distinguished them, is traced back to Jesus Himself (Luke vi. 13). But in this choice and commission Jesus did not found an office in the sense of a legal institution with special authority. He did not even intend an exclusive or privileged missionary office, much less an office of teaching and guiding that should be authoritative for the Church in all time to come, for according to an undoubtedly trustworthy report He sent out during His lifetime seventy disciples (Luke x. 1–17), and charged all His followers with the extension of His kingdom afterwards (Matt. v. 13, 14). Without denying the distinctions of greater and less among His disciples, and specially recognising, for example, the ripened manhood and superiority and gifts of leadership in Peter (Matt. xviii. 10; Mark x. 43; Luke xii. 42; John xxi. 15 ff.), we must yet allow that He deprived them of every distinction of rank, and placed them solely in a relation of brotherly equality (Matt. xxiii. 8). He excluded any claim to rule as teacher or as patron within the community of His disciples by forbidding them to assume the name Rabbi, and saying to them, "Ye shall call no man Master, and no man father on earth: for one is your Father, who is in heaven, and one is your Master, even Christ" (Matt. xxiii. 8–10); He also interdicted all selfish ambition and all desire for power among them, and only permitted the emulation in self-denying love and service in which, as we see from His comparison with His own redeeming service of love, He saw, above all, the

power of helping one another on towards eternal well-being (Matt. xx. 26, 27; Luke xxii. 25, 26).<sup>1</sup>

### § 2. THE CHURCH

This preliminary society of teachers and scholars in which the kingdom took its rise is followed by the community (or Church), *ἐκκλησία*, which appears, from Matt. xvi. 18, still in the future. The term *ἐκκλησία* appears seldom, and at a late period in the sayings of Jesus. After the passage just quoted the word appears only in Matt. xviii. 15–20, a paragraph which is indeed important in a variety of ways, and stands out as a Magna Charta of the Church. But there is no real ground for disputing that the word is His, or for referring its origin to a later period in the Church. For not only is *ἐκκλησία* (*בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל* or *גְּדוֹלָה*, assembly or congregation in the original sense in which Luther has used the word (Acts xix. 39) of an assembly of citizens) an idea already found in the Old Testament, but it can easily be seen why Jesus only at a later period, but then of necessity, made it His own. So long as there was any hope of realising His work within the Old Testament national community, He could have no thought of founding a community of His own. But when this hope was at an end, when the decisive breach between His kingdom and the constituted national community of the Jews proved inevitable, and His rejection and crucifixion came clearly into view, how could Jesus think of His disciples as representing the cause of His kingdom when He was dead except in the form of a community distinct from the Jewish religious community, and worshipping God in His name as Father? But the two passages, Matt. xvi. 18, xviii. 15–20, let us all see how the idea of a community grew in the mind of Jesus. In the first—"On this rock will I build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"—the idea still

<sup>1</sup> The royalty which Jesus (Luke xxii. 28) promises to His disciples, and which Wendt applies to their future working for the setting up of the Messianic kingdom, applies rather to their position in the completed kingdom (Luke xix. 17 f.; Matt. xx. 28), and is not at all a specific promise to apostles, but a general promise to Christians; cf. 1 Cor. iv. 8; Rev. i. 6, v. 10.

appears in an abstract form. The community is here the one beside which there can be no second. At all times, and in all places, the same, it has the guarantee of immortality, the promise of not being mastered by the gates of the kingdom of death, which so master and irrevocably close upon all other appearances in history.<sup>1</sup> In the other passage—"Tell it to the Church; and if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be to thee as an heathen man and a publican"—it is thought of rather in its outward appearance as the individual Church dwelling in a definite place and assembling at a definite time; for such only can have a matter laid before it, and only by such can an obstinate sinner be exhorted and excommunicated. But the saying which we find in the same connection: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name I am in the midst of them," harmonises to some extent the visible and invisible nature of the Church. It contains the whole of Jesus' definition of the Church. Wherever men, even in the smallest numbers, are found together believing on Him; wherever they unite for the worship of God, thinking on Jesus and trusting in Him,—there is the Christian Church—in hundreds of places of the earth's circumference. As in Israel the thousand scattered synagogues were embraced in one great community by the name of Jehovah and His presence in the temple, so all these Christian congregations become one through mutual participation in the name of Jesus and His universal presence. This leads us to His personal relation to the community, and therefore still deeper into its nature and significance. According to Matt. xvi. 18, He himself desires to build His Church in the future (*οἰκοδομήσω*), which, from the whole connection, can only lie beyond His death (ver. 21). The words therefore attest His certainty of a life passing through death, and capable of a continuous influence and creation on earth after death, which death cannot interrupt. In a word, it is in the

<sup>1</sup> For the *πύλαις ἀδύν* are not, as ignorance sometimes thinks, the gates of the kingdom of the devil, for why its gates should fight is not obvious; they are the iron gates of the kingdom of the dead, the kingdom of the perishable, which masters, that is, receives and shuts in, all earth-born things. Luther has translated the two very different ideas—Hades and Gehenna—with hell.

certainty of the resurrection (already contained in His sayings about death) that He spoke. And in spite of the present *εἰμί*, the saying, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name I am in the midst of them," points to the same future life. For that presupposes that it can be in a hundred places at the same time, an existence no longer bound by the limits of space and the conditions of an earthly life, a life exalted like God's own. And so we learn here—more plainly perhaps than anywhere else—the idea which Jesus had of the resurrection, it is closely bound up with His idea of death, as He was convinced that death could not destroy, but must further His work on earth. We learn especially how His resurrection stood related in His thought to the continuance and progress of His kingdom. By the power of His resurrection He will build His Church and will dwell in the midst of it, just as Jehovah was thought of as dwelling in the temple, in the midst of the Old Testament Church. And in His Church He will continue to live and work on earth after His death. He in the spirit, in a transfigured life, will be its moving soul: and it will be, as the apostle afterwards says, His body, the instrument by which He continues to work among men. According to our usual way of thinking, the middle term of the outpouring of the Spirit seems to be wanting here. And it is surprising that in the synoptic tradition there is so little said of the Holy Spirit, which was thought of in the Old Testament as the first gift of the Messianic kingdom, and which was promised by the Baptist as the Messianic counterpart to his baptism of water. This form of the promise is only once faintly echoed in the synoptic sayings of Jesus, in that passage in which He assures His disciples that their Father's Spirit will speak in them (Matt. x. 20), so that they may perfectly do their work and defend their cause. The riddle is read when we remember that even in the farewell discourses in John, which supplement the meagre synoptic tradition on this point, the promise of the Paraclete, the Spirit to be sent to take His place, and the promise of His own return to be with His people, are in substance one and the same. Christ's saying about the sin against the Holy Ghost (Matt. xii.) shows that in His lifetime the Son of Man and the Holy Spirit were distinct, the earthly

and half-concealed manifestation of the divine on the one hand, and the divine essence living in Him and working through Him on the other; but this distinction ceased with the glorification of Jesus so far as His earthly presence and activity are concerned. The Lord, just in virtue of His death and resurrection, becomes—in the language of Paul—*πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν* (1 Cor. xv. 45), a quickening spirit. In the synoptic tradition, however, the more personal conception of the future spiritual communion and activity prevails—not only in the two sayings already quoted, but also in the closing words of the Gospel of Matthew, which coincide with the promise of the Spirit at the close of Luke (xxiv. 49): “Lo I am with you always, even to the end of the world” (Matt. xxviii. 20).

### § 3. CHURCH ORDER: (a) GOVERNMENT OF THE SPIRIT, FAITH AND PRAYER, BINDING AND LOOSING

From this presupposition of the presence of Christ in the Spirit springs what we may call the constitution of the Church as fixed by Jesus, of which the clearest statement is in Matt. xviii. 15–20, a constitution of the Spirit and of freedom. No statute or visible government is found here, such as the kingdoms of this world have as their indispensable foundation. On the contrary, what was previously said to the disciples in such sayings as Matt. xx. 25–27, xxiii. 8–11, is in Matt. xviii. 15–20 made valid for the whole future Church. “If thy brother sin against thee,” begins the remarkable passage. His Church therefore is to be a community of brethren, as was already emphasised in the words, “One is your master, and all ye are brethren.” In this community of brethren all have the office of improving and protecting one another. It rests on the universal right and duty of a mutual cure of souls. “If thy brother sin against thee, rebuke him; that is, tell him his fault between thee and him alone. If he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother (won him back to God and His kingdom). But if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more,” etc. But further, this community of brethren, as such, is in its own affairs the highest deciding authority. “If he (the sinner)

will not hear thee and the two or three more who have exhorted him, tell it to the Church ; and if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." And it is to be so, not merely in the exercise of discipline, to which we will shortly return. The "ye" who have the authority to bind and loose, and whose united prayer is heard, are not, as is often said, the apostles ; the whole context requires that we recognise in them all the disciples of Jesus, all the members of the Church. For in ver. 20 the foundation of that authority is thus expressed, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." The authority rests in the congregation of believers as such in the Church. Just because He desires unseen to govern in the spirit those who gather in His name, they can and must govern themselves in the public acts of the Church's life. The chief distinction between the Churches of the new covenant and the old is that the Spirit of the Lord is no longer the special endowment of particular persons and officials, but is "poured out on all flesh," and therefore the possession of the Spirit by the whole community will always be more rich and many-sided than its possession by an individual member, however prominent. What makes this rule in the Church of Jesus, the Lord, the Spirit (2 Cor. iii. 17), both possible and perfect, is faith. Though the word is not uttered, faith in Him as the Messiah and as principle of the Church's life is presupposed in the gathering in His name, viz. to worship God as Father in this name. His name (of Saviour) is therefore the proper object of faith (Acts iv. 12), and in faith in this name men are united with Him, the invisible and glorified Lord and Master, as well as with one another. From this is explained, in the first place, the acceptance of the Church's prayers. "If two or three of you will agree on earth as touching anything that ye shall ask, it shall be done for you of My Father who is in heaven" (ver. 19). The idea here, as the following verse with its "in My name" shows, is the same as what John's Gospel designates prayer in the name of Jesus (John xiv. 13, 14). The presupposition is, that He in spirit is the uniting element in virtue of which the two agree. It is He, therefore, who prompts their prayer, and because it has been

thus born from His mind and spirit, and has sprung from faith in Him, it will also agree with the eternal thoughts of God, and be heard in heaven. From the same point of view of faith and spiritual communion with Him through faith, we obtain light on the preceding promise regarding binding and loosing. What is meant by this binding and loosing (xvi. 19) which appears in the promises to Peter? Traditionally it is regarded as meaning the power of retaining or remitting sin (John xx. 23), and thus brought into connection with the foregoing authority to excommunicate. But then, as the kingdom of heaven has to do with emancipating the conscience rather than with fettering it, it is not clear why the binding stands first, and why the object is in the neuter ( $\delta$ ,  $\delta\sigma$ ) both times, as the point in question was the inner binding and loosing of man. But if we are to think, in the case of the  $\delta$ ,  $\delta\sigma$ , not of man, but of sin, then the expression is more than ever inconceivable and grammatically impossible, since an idea such as  $\alpha\muαρτίματα$  could in no circumstance remain unexpressed, and merely be added in thought. Even the advocates of this exposition must admit that though  $\lambdaύειν$   $\alpha\muαρτίαν$  might perhaps be intelligible = a remission of sin, yet to explain  $\deltaέειν$  in the sense of retaining sin, or declaring the sinner to be forfeit to the judgment of God, is incredible and inexplicable.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, Rabbinic and Talmudic scholars have taught us that the phrase "binding and loosing" was quite current in the speech of the scribes, in the sense of declaring something to be binding or not binding, forbidden or permitted;<sup>2</sup> and this is faintly echoed elsewhere in the words of Jesus, in respect of the loosing, plainly in Matt. v. 19, in respect of the binding, at least in the allusion, Matt. xxiii. 4. It is not accurate to say that the context in Matt. xviii. 18 decides against this exposition that is commended by language and history, and in favour of the traditional.<sup>3</sup> The order of discipline set up in vers. 15–17 cannot possibly coincide

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Cremer, p. 571.

<sup>2</sup> Thus Lightfoot, Schöttchen, Wetstein. Only the accurate sense of the common "Schola Hilleiana solvit, Schammajana ligat" is not, that permits, this forbids; for the scribes have nothing to permit or forbid, but that is declared to be not binding, this to be binding.

<sup>3</sup> Thus Weiss, p. 106; p. 141, vol. i. Eng. trans.

with the whole province of the Christian forgiveness of sin. It can only refer to those sins which destroy a man's position as a Christian, and therefore are inconsistent with Church fellowship, as may be seen from that "thou hast gained thy brother" (that is, preserved him from being lost, cf. Jas. v. 19, 20). But that destroys the supposed connection between the exercise of discipline and absolution or retention (extending to all defects). It is clear, on the other hand, that that judicial procedure of the Church necessarily presupposes a legislative procedure, defining what is consistent and what is inconsistent with its fellowship; and if, in the case of Jesus, the whole idea of the Church rested on the anticipation of a religious separation of His own from Judaism, it is easily conceivable why in both of the above passages He should emphasise this legislative right of His future Church. Not everything that He and His disciples still held of the Mosaic and traditional law and commandments was to be binding on His future Church, though everything was by no means to be given up. Here, therefore, was a new moral legislation; it was necessary to discover what was consistent and what was inconsistent with citizenship in the kingdom of God, and who could discover this but the community of believers? They must determine what was morally permissible or not permissible by the principle of faith in Him and spiritual communion with Him, and thus they would discover thoughts of God which He Himself could not utter beforehand in detail (John xvi. 12); that is, they would bind and loose with heavenly approbation, and this right of binding and loosing must be the presupposition of their exercise of discipline and their essential acts of excommunication.<sup>1</sup>

#### § 4. CHURCH ORDER: (b) LOVE, DISCIPLINE, INFALLIBILITY

Along with faith, however, there prevails in the Church of Jesus the love that springs from it and unites believers with one another as brethren, as children of one Father and

<sup>1</sup> Thus, for example, the apostolic Church loosed, that is, set free the question of circumcision, but bound the *μορφής*, that is, the non-nuptial intercourse of the sexes, that is, declared it forbidden, inconsistent with the Christian profession. Cf. Acts xv. 19, 20.

disciples of one Master. It begets a mutual interchange of giving and receiving, in which the giving, as being the more unselfish, is more blessed than the receiving (Acts xx. 35), and it works so that "the little ones," the simple and humble, can allow themselves to be ministered to without shame, and the great, the gifted, and the prominent, find their greatness just in serving. Special tasks (offices) could certainly arise here out of the general brotherly task, as, for example, in a household the steward is set over the other servants that he may give to each his portion in due season (Luke xii. 41, 42). But these offices are, as the Greek word *diaconia* means, services, services of love which do not abolish the essential equality of all, and he who is intrusted with them humbles himself as much as he is exalted (Matt. xx. 26, 27). In like manner forgiveness and brotherly discipline proceed from love. Forgiveness must be rendered so freely that if a brother wound a brother seven times a day, and come seven times to say that he is sorry, he must always be forgiven (Luke xvii. 3, 4). Still, no weak indulgence passes here, no overlooking or sheltering of sin in others; for a true and sanctified love desires the brother's good, and therefore it holds his sin before him in order to convert him from the error of his ways; this is a duty especially where the sin is not one of passing thoughtlessness, but clings to him, where it is an error that calls his very position as a child of God in question. And from this spiritual discipline, from this practical care of brother for brother which is exercised in privately winning back to God's way the wanderer, the judicial discipline, the official rebuke, and in extreme cases even excommunication from the Church, may be and is to be developed (Matt. xviii. 15). For the undoubted and obstinate offence against the holy order of the house of God cannot in the end be endured, because it would overturn that order; and therefore Jesus commands that the man who hardens himself in obstinate opposition to the commandments of God be excommunicated from brotherly communion, "if he will not hear the Church."<sup>1</sup> This has

<sup>1</sup> "Let him be to thee as an heathen and a publican," that is, let him be regarded as the heathen or publican is in the Jewish synagogues from which he is excluded, no doubt means, not merely the repudiation of brotherly

sometimes been regarded as an element foreign to His teaching, a limitation put upon the love that should be unlimited. But this is to overlook the fact that the love of God, though infinite, must, if it is to continue a holy love, set limits to the obstinate and wilful sinner. There must be self-preservation in the Church of God, making it impossible for her to treat the incorrigible as a brother in Christ, or to allow this incorrigibility to appear as still consistent with the Christian profession. Of course it is as evident to Jesus that the seeking and pitying love for heathen and publicans does not cease when the relation of brother in the faith has been repudiated; it now makes a fresh start, for that repudiation meant no unkindness to the sinner, but the only sort of love the circumstances would allow. The truly surprising thing here is the wonderful idealism of that whole Church order of Jesus, in which there breathes not the faintest suspicion that the Church might act from other motives than the inspiration of His holy presence in its midst; there is no hint that the Church could ever be united in asking for what was ungodly, or for what the heavenly Father could not grant, or that it should desire to bind or loose anything that was not bound or loosed in heaven, or finally, that it could ever abuse that authoritative exercise of discipline against an innocent person, an actual child of God. This idealism assures us, at anyrate, of the authenticity of the sayings in question. For if, as many suppose, they were of later ecclesiastical origin, they would have arisen after experience of the difference between idea and reality, and they would have been framed to meet that difference. That idealism is absolutely true to Jesus, and its reservations are already implied in it. Jesus, of course, speaks throughout from a purely ideal point of view. If the Church is met in His name, and as far as it is met in His name, with His memory inspiring and uniting it, so that He can truly be said to be in its midst, all will be as He promises. Where this presupposition fails, the result will also, as a matter of course, fail. Thus, a king gives his

communion on the part of the man who has vainly admonished him, but a repudiation on the part of the Church as such. For Jesus would never have endured, much less enjoined, individual repudiations of brotherhood within the Church whilst that brotherhood continued to exist in public.

officers and courts of justice authority to act in his name to justify or condemn, and assures them of the royal confirmation and execution of their decisions. But he does so, of course, on the presupposition that they proceed according to his laws and not in contradiction to them. Jesus gave Himself up to no delusive idealism as to the future of His Church, without any foreboding of error and degeneracy in it. The Parable of the Tares among the Wheat and many other passages attest the contrary. Only, He had the assurance that as His Church should not be mastered by the gates of Hades, so it would never abandon His name; that His image and memory would ever again revive in it, and thus His spirit, even through striving and conflict, would again and again carry the day in it. And, in any case, He knew no other place of His abiding presence, and activity than the Church. What depends on inward conditions, on His own glorified and spiritual presence, must not be bound up with any external institutions or authorities. The matter must ever stand thus; the Church of believers as such, the Church which is brought together and held together by His name, is the instrument of His will, the place of His continuous revelation on earth. And though its authority and infallibility, depending as they do on what is spiritual, and being, therefore, in a measure invisible, can never have a legal definition, yet this Church in its own affairs remains the only rightful and the highest court of appeal on earth, and any outward judicial authority which would display itself in it, or has done so, in order to rule over it and hold it in tutelage, is false, illegal, and condemned by Him in advance.

#### § 5. THE AUTHORITY OF PETER, MATT. XVI. 18, 19

All this would indeed fall to the ground if the well-known Romish interpretation of Matt. xvi. 18, 19 were right. According to it, Jesus must, of course, have given to His Church an outward and perceptible authority, a law and government of as thorough a nature as could be imagined. Before there was an *ἐκκλησία*, and consequently before there was any official authority, He had laid the firm foundation of such an authority in Peter. Peter was the rock on which should

depend the imperishableness of the Church against which the gates of Hades should not prevail ; this official power was to devolve upon the Romish bishops as the legal successors of the prince apostle. He constituted Peter His *alter ego*, His vicegerent on earth, and delivered to him the keys of the kingdom of heaven ; and He only gave the power to bind and loose to the other apostles as the predecessors of the other bishops and priests, in such a way that Peter's authority and Peter's legal successors should always remain the firm basis on which they all with their rights and authorities must rest. We can easily understand how the Papacy, honouring itself, should like to write these words on the dome of St. Peter's in gigantic letters. It is easy to see how an unspiritual interpretation should find here the legal title of the whole Romish system. Undoubtedly the expositions of Protestants of this text have not been happy. There can be no controversy among reasonable men in view of the words, Σὺ εἶ Πέτρος, καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτη τῷ πέτρᾳ οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, that Jesus, by the rock on which he will build His Church, did not mean Himself nor the confession of Peter, nor even the faith which Peter has just confessed, but the man himself to whom He has given the name rock, and to whom He now confirms it as deserved. And the words which immediately follow, καὶ δώσω σοι τὰς κλεῖδας τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν, certainly appear to establish decisively the idea of a representative and vicegerent of Christ on earth. For the image which lies at the basis of these words cannot be that of a doorkeeper, for that would be one of the least services in the house of God, while Jesus manifestly desires to award to Peter a distinguished position. Nor—as we might suppose from Luke xii. 42—is it a picture of a steward in a private house, an upper servant intrusted with the keys of the storeroom. For Jesus applies the same image at other times, in things of the kingdom, not to the giving out of stores, but to the admission or non-admission of persons (cf. Matt. xxiii. 13; Luke xi. 52). It is rather the crown officer of the kingdom of Judah, mentioned in Isa. xxii., to which Jesus here alludes. The office of that mayor of the palace of whom it is said : "I will lay upon his shoulder the keys of the house of David, that he may shut and no man open,

and open and no man shut." Though expositors generally interpret the symbol of the key with reference to judicial or governing power, yet it is more natural and more correct to think of entrance to the royal house and the king's person, which the mayor of the palace could grant or deny without any person's being able to question his decisions. Accordingly, in the new covenant and in the eternal Father's house this office in relation to God belongs above all to Jesus Himself. He has the key of David it is said in Rev. iii. 7. He opens and no man shuts, He shuts and no man opens. But if we speak of the earthly existence of the kingdom of God in the Church, and think of Jesus Himself as the King, the anointed One, and both of these ideas are contained in our passages, then Jesus can intrust another with that office. He is about to leave the earth (Matt. xxi. 21 ff.), and will soon cease personally to hold the keys of the kingdom of heaven on earth; He needs, therefore, a representative and chief officer such as was in Israel, who shall continue in His name to open the kingdom of heaven to men, or close it as the case requires (therefore the plural *κλεῖδας*), and He appoints Peter to this office of bearer of His keys. Now the succession on the ground of which the Roman bishops claim Peter's authority is in all respects very doubtful. But if Jesus did appoint a vicegerent on earth with judicial authority, there must always be a legal succession in this office, and it would be difficult for any other bishop or official of the Church to advance better claims than the bishop of Rome. And if we add, that with the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven is given also the power of binding and loosing, that is, of legislating in the kingdom of God, and declaring what is and what is not permitted in the Church, we seem to have, not merely the Papacy, but an infallible Papacy established by Christ, and for that we have better scriptural proofs than the Vatican Council were able to get hold of. For He whose binding and loosing is always found right in heaven is surely to be called infallible. But this formidable chain of Romish proofs lacks just the first member on which all the rest are to hang, the proof that Jesus there founded an office at all, or conferred a judicial authority and not simply an inward authority depending on

the personal qualities of the man who was invested with it. The more one considers the passage the more impossible it is to hold that He intended to found an office. First, the occasion of the saying is a purely personal one, the confession of Peter. Jesus has disenchanted the Galileans by not fulfilling their sensuous Messianic hopes. They still hold Him to be a great prophet and forerunner, an Elias, but they no longer hold Him to be the Christ, the Messiah, and Son of God, as thousands at first had supposed, for the Baptist had pointed them to a greater who should immediately appear. But He wishes to be recognised as Messiah in a higher and spiritual sense, and His work on His disciples was directed to this end that they, in spite of the want of earthly sensuous glory, might yet recognise Him for what He was. And now that He is about to set out on His last journey to Jerusalem He seeks to discover by conversation with them whether He has reached in them at least that for which He strove, and He has reached it in the most mature among them, viz. Peter. To the question, "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter can answer from his inmost heart, "Thou art the Christ (Messiah), the Son of the living God." That was a very different confession of faith from that which they had made to each other in the first days at the Jordan—"we have found the Messiah" (John i. 45); a man, John the Baptist, had taught it to them, and they had with purely sensuous expectations believed him. That expectation had remained unfulfilled, but an inner experience, a divine testimony of the Spirit, had revealed it in Peter's heart and made him certain of it. He was the first believer, in the New Testament sense, whom Jesus won. He was, in a word, the first Christian, as he was able to utter, not from a communication of flesh and blood, but from a revelation of the heavenly Father, the confession, "Thou art the Christ." And that accounts for the great and unique words Jesus speaks to him. Setting, as it were, recognition against recognition, He replies: "I say unto thee thou art Peter, and on this *πέτρα* will I build my Church"; that is, you have to-day made good the name rock which I gave thee. You are the rock, the first firm stone on which I can further build. And if on leaving the earth I should leave behind me no man with true faith and heart knowledge coming from

God except thyself, I should have lived long enough; for I should have laid the foundation on which I could then build my Church from heaven. For the first living believer in Christ is also the born preacher of Christ, who will call into existence a whole community of believers in Christ, as Peter did—not in Rome as its mythical bishop, but in Jerusalem at Pentecost (Acts ii. 14). And that is just what the following words mean: “I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.” The keys of the kingdom of heaven are the truths of the gospel, the fact of the coming of the kingdom of God; by these Jesus Himself has hitherto opened the kingdom of heaven to men, or closed it in the case of those who lacked susceptibility. He now desires to bequeath them to the first, and, as yet, the only one who has truly known Him; for He only can use them according to His mind. And the same believing knowledge which will enable Peter to preach Christ, and so to found the Church, will also enable him to distinguish what of the old order in Israel will remain binding in the Church and what will not; that is, it will enable him to bind or loose with heavenly approbation. Thus everything which is there awarded to Peter rests on a personal act of faith, on a spiritual character which cannot be transferred in any legal sense. The legal successors of Peter, so far as we can speak of such, are not bishops or popes as such, but believers in Christ like him, simple believers and all believers in Christ. Thus only do we escape the contradiction that Jesus grants the right to bind and loose in Matt. xviii. 18 to all the disciples, not to the apostles, but to all believers, which in Matt. xvi. 19 He had granted to Peter alone. That which belongs to the first, and, as yet, only believer in Christ, belongs as a matter of course, as soon as there is a Church of believers, to the Church. If, on the contrary, Jesus, in Matt. xvi. 19, had spoken of the authority of an organised office in or rather over the Church, the same could not possibly be awarded in Matt. xviii. 18 to the Church herself. Thus the passage Matt. xvi. 19 rather confirms what we formerly said of the Church, that it is based on no legal or official organisation, but only on a spiritual relation to Him who is its glorified head; and since that relation of faith in Him as the Messiah, which Peter confessed is common to all, the Church

as such must also be the bearer of all the blessings of grace and powers of the kingdom which Jesus bequeaths to His own.

#### § 6. OBJECTIVE POINTS OF SUPPORT FOR THE CHURCH LIFE (BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER)

The Church certainly needed protection against one danger which lay in her very nature as thus portrayed, viz. the danger of a onesided inwardness into which her free and spiritual character might allure her. Since His presence in the Church was spiritual, the enthusiasm of faith and love in men, still weak, was threatened by the temptation to bring in what was alien and arbitrary, and so to produce in themselves a spirit different from that in which He could dwell. A church life wholly without forms would plainly have helped in this tendency, and would perhaps soon have made the identity of the development with the original seem questionable. Therefore we see Jesus taking care, along with the law of the Spirit which He imparts to His own in faith and love, to impress on them at the same time the historical aspect of His life and work. It was not without a purpose that He constituted the Twelve constant witnesses of this life and work. It was not without a purpose that He imparted formal instruction to His disciples (cf. Mark iv. 10 f., iv. 24 f.); and though, with His divine tact, He was careful not to impress on them any enslaving formula, far less to leave behind Him any writing which would forthwith have paralysed the vitality of their faith, He yet reckoned that the image of His person and the memory of His work would continue to live truly in His Church. That is His meaning when He speaks of their gathering in His name, that is, in a living realisation of His personal life and work, and the keys of the kingdom of heaven which He delivers to them speak of the transmission of all that He has taught them (Matt. xxviii. 20); and the intrusted talents and pounds are the capital which He puts in their hands, in order to test their fidelity and increase His possessions on earth through their trading. And His first disciples, in point of fact, did by reflection produce a faithful tradition of Him for all following times. Immediately before His death He

saw good—perhaps with an eye to the indefinite time of the outer separation from Him—to give His Church still more definite points of support which the current of tradition could still less sweep away, the Supper and baptism. It has been questioned—without the least reason in our opinion—whether Jesus, in the breaking of bread and the consecration of the cup at the farewell Supper, wished to found a permanent institution for the Church of His disciples. First, the Pauline utterance, 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25, the oldest and most reliable testimony to the event in question, contains the words, *τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἔμμην ἀνάμνησιν*, as Jesus' own words, and the want of these words in the Gospels may have the less significance as in other respects the traces of liturgical abbreviation of the words of institution may be perceived. And again, I do not know for what end Jesus, unless He had the intention of founding a permanent rite, should on that evening have had recourse to such emblematic expression for His thoughts of death, when He could have put these thoughts in words which would have been not only simpler, but also more intelligible for the moment. Light is thrown upon all He did when we see that He was setting up a memorial to recall His image and His work to their minds when He was gone (cf. the expression, until He come, 1 Cor. xi. 26). From elements of the Old Testament Passover meal, Jesus constructed a holy sacrificial meal of the new covenant in the noblest and simplest form, which realises for all time and puts beyond question what He had willed and done for His own, and what, through His death, He desires to be and to do for their souls to the end of time. In that simple festival He makes known for all time the sum and height of His thoughts of His own work as Saviour; in presence of death, to which He willingly surrendered Himself, He recognised that all His brethren, even those faithful ones who had continued with Him in His temptations, had need both of redemption and forgiveness, whilst He knew that He was the spotless and innocent Lamb of God who gives His life for them to bring in a new covenant, the covenant of grace, forgiveness, and communion with God. He knew that He was giving His life not to destruction, but to be raised higher, so that to the end of the world He might be food and drink for

the souls He had won. And by this very means He has given the most effective centre for the gatherings and festivals of His future Church that could be conceived. Here is an act which again and again draws the Church into the experience of the great historical hour of salvation, and into the communion of spirit and life with Him who died for her and rose again ; and in bringing them nearer to Him, it must draw closer the bonds of brotherly love which bind all those who partake as children of one Father's house and guest at one table of grace. And just as holy communion is to be sought always as the rallying point of the Church, so baptism is the point which, once for all, distinguishes it from the world. The Gospels trace back its founding to the days of the Risen One on earth, and therefore, as the entire tradition of those days has in it something wavering and wanting in clearness, the derivation of this ordinance from Jesus is more obscure and disputable. The trinitarian baptismal formula, contained in Matt. xxviii. 19, does not, in this form at anyrate, proceed from Jesus, for the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles know only of one baptism in the name of Jesus, which would be inconceivable if He Himself had prescribed that more detailed formula. However, apart from this subsidiary point, no real doubt can exist as to the institution of baptism by Jesus for those who find in the intercourse of the Risen One with His disciples something more than self-deception. The practice of baptism as a rite of reception, a practice which, so far as we can see, was from the very beginning of the Church quite a matter of course,—just as much a matter of course to Paul as to the earlier apostles,—cannot very well be explained without an appointment of Jesus underlying it. And the reasons of such an ordinance can be recognised without difficulty. While the Church was obliged to live within Judaism, and at the same time to distinguish herself from Judaism in order to discharge her missionary calling, she needed a sign of reception, a distinct ordinance, by which the individual was separated from the unbelieving world and incorporated with the Church of believers. And for this end Jesus, as may be easily understood, fell back on the emblematic ordinance with which the Baptist had opened the whole movement connected with the kingdom of heaven, and sought to

form out of the old sinful Israel a new sanctified Israel. Now people were to be baptized, not for a kingdom at hand, but for the kingdom that had come; not with a view to the coming Messiah, but to the Messiah who had appeared in Jesus, that is, in the name of Jesus. The meaning of the ordinance, the washing away of sin and guilt, repentance and forgiveness, remained, of course, the same, except that what the Baptist had prefigured rather than communicated, was now represented and sealed as a present salvation, as an experience consummating itself through Jesus and faith in Him. And thus this ordinance, like a stone inscription which cannot be corrupted, proclaims the whole meaning of the coming and work of Jesus, that He came to bring forgiveness by means of renewal, and renewal by means of forgiveness, and thus to receive into the kingdom of God. That Jesus attached a special promise to the outer ordinance, whether of baptism or the Supper, and ascribed to it a power working of itself, is an idea of which we find no trace, and it would entirely conflict with His whole teaching and its thorough spirituality. Baptism symbolises and guarantees, to the penitent and believing man, the forgiveness of sin. The Supper symbolises and assures him of communion with the life of the Crucified and Risen One; but neither that forgiveness nor this communion of life is in the teaching of Jesus bound up with the sacrament. And therefore we may speak of it as a comfort and a blessing for the individual, but not as necessary to salvation. The apostles, from all we know, never received the baptism of water in the name of Jesus. These institutions are more indispensable for the life of the Church, as such, than for the individual believer. They place before the eyes of the Church, existing visibly in the world, the thoughts and the work of salvation of Jesus; they distinguish it from the world, and cause it ever and again to unite in Him.

#### § 7. HISTORICAL TASK OF THE CHURCH

It remains for us to consider the tasks and prospects in the work which Jesus discloses to the Church thus endowed by Him. The two tasks of proclaiming to the world the kingdom of God and of keeping one's own place in that

kingdom coincide, in so far as the one is impossible without the other. This is specially set forth in the saying which Matt. v. 13–16 incorporates in the Sermon on the Mount : “ Ye are the salt of the earth ; ye are the light of the world.” Not abstract doctrines, however true and good, can so season the world that it may become acceptable to God, and so lighten it that it may know God and walk in His ways. That can only be done by living men in whom the gospel of the kingdom presents itself in its divine power, and whom it has so filled with light that their good works like rays of light go forth from them on all sides (ver. 16). But for that very reason they who have received so high a calling must doubly guard against being themselves evil. As representatives of the cause of a divine kingdom they are placed like a city on a hill which draws to itself the look of the wanderer from afar. They of themselves challenge men to compare their confession and their walk. They ought not therefore to put their light under a bushel, that is, they are not to make their knowledge and doctrine inoperative by an unholy walk ; their walk must rather be the candlestick which carries the light of their knowledge. They must not forget that “ the salt ” in them cannot possibly season and sanctify others (Mark ix. 49, 50), unless at the same time it is seasoning their own lives as they exercise unwearied self - criticism and self - judgment. Salt, which in the symbolism of the Old Testament worship was regarded as of such excellence that it had to be present in every sacrifice (Mark ix. 49), is one of the most worthless things “ when it has lost its savour. It is then good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men.” The world would in justice deal in the same way with any Christian church which should proclaim to it the power of God to salvation, and display nothing of that power in itself.<sup>1</sup> That Jesus did

<sup>1</sup> This is how I understand the difficult passage, Mark ix. 49, 50, which the saying in Matt. v. 13 completes, or according to other sources repeats. As in the old covenant every sacrifice was salted with salt, that is, seasoned as it were for God and made acceptable, so must every one who will enter into the kingdom of God be made fit for it, consecrated or sanctified by the pungent critical power of the gospel. Therefore, have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another ; that is, be severe towards yourselves, but mild, peaceful towards others.

not think of this seasoning and enlightening influence on the world solely as preaching, is shown by the closing words of the saying in Matthew, "that men seeing your good works may glorify your Father in heaven." The testimony of good works, of a life in love and holiness, is, to Him, that without which all preaching of the word is vain. But the word of the gospel must be preached, even as a word, and the commission thereto most emphatically runs through the addresses of Jesus to His disciples. There is no doubt that He intended some disciples to make this preaching a special vocation—those whom He seeks to make fishers of men (Mark i. 17), and to whom He also gives the right to their sustenance in the prosecution of their calling (Matt. x. 10; 1 Cor. ix. 14). But assuredly He did not limit His commission of preaching to these professional workers. But, as in the days of His ministry, after sending out the Twelve, He also sent every one at His disposal up to the Seventy, and as He made a preacher of the man whom He healed at Decapolis, and whom He forbade to follow Him, saying, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them what great things the Lord hath done for thee" (Mark v. 19), so He desired His Church to be a preaching Church in which each should testify of Him according to his gifts and circumstances. Words such as, "What I tell you in the darkness, that speak in the light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye on the housetops" (Matt. x. 27; Luke xii. 3), are not spoken to the apostles, but to all disciples. There can be just as little doubt as to the wide circle of hearers for whom Jesus meant His gospel through the disciples. It is inconceivable that Jesus could ever have thought less liberally with regard to the calling of the Gentiles to the kingdom of God than the prophets, in whose eyes the religion of revelation had already become the religion of the world. That He confined His own work to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. xv. 24) does not contradict this. Even in His meeting with the Canaanitish woman, when He compares the Jews to the children of the house, and the heathen to the dogs of the house, He only expresses what was actually the case. The Israelites knew the heavenly Father and had claims as children on Him, whilst the heathen to whom God was only a dark power of

nature, and with whom He had concluded no covenant of promise, were as domestic animals in His Father's house. But they were not to remain so: "Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God: but the children of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness," run His words (Matt. viii. 12; Luke xiii. 28), almost reminding us of Rom. ix. 11, yet indisputable. Only, in His idea of the kingdom we must distinguish between present and future, between what was laid on Him in His life on earth and what He lays upon His Church. He Himself is conscious of being sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Where God Himself had prepared the way of His kingdom by law and prophets, there must the kingdom be established before it can open its doors to the heathen outside. Therefore, in all seriousness, He at first denied His miraculous help to the Canaanitish woman, which was only a subordinate task of His Messianic mission, and only when He discovered in her a faith such as He had not found in Israel (Matt. viii. 10), did He make her an exception, who henceforth was no longer an exception (Matt. xv. 21-28; Mark vii. 24-30). In the case of the centurion of Capernaum, who was a citizen and coreligionist of Israel, He had no scruples, and just as little with the Samaritan among the lepers (Matt. viii. 5-13; Luke vii. 2-10, xvii. 11-19). In proportion as His tragic end in Israel forced itself upon Him, the heathen world drew inwardly nearer and nearer to Him so that He gradually placed His best hopes in it. Even in the middle of His ministry He searched out from the Old Testament all the examples of heathen susceptibility for the divine revelation in order to shame Israel by the contrast of their unsusceptibility with the widow of Zarephthah and the Syrian Naaman (Luke iv. 26, 27), the people of Nineveh and the Queen of Sheba (Matt. xii. 41, 42). He is convinced that if the mighty works which were done in Bethsaida and Capernaum had been done in Tyre and Sidon, these old luxurious and disreputable heathen cities would have repented (Matt. xi. 20-24; Luke x. 13, 14). Accordingly, there can be no doubt—in spite of any formal inaccuracies or uncertainty in His final commission as reported in the Gospels, Matt. xxviii.,

Luke xxiv.—that He expressly pointed His disciples to the heathen world as well as to Israel, as the sphere of their mission. His own words in sending out the Twelve in the middle of His ministry, “Go not into the way of the Gentiles, nor into any city of the Samaritans,” ought not to have been adduced against this. The time for a mission to the Gentiles had not then arrived, the disciples would not have been in any way competent to undertake it, and the attempt to do so would only have hindered their access to their own people. Moreover, the words would have been quite superfluous, if Jesus had not been training His disciples in large-hearted dispositions towards those who were not Jews. But the time came when it was said, “Go into all the world and teach all nations, preach the gospel to every creature” (Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15). We must not infer from the inaccurate and condensed report of these last sayings that Jesus expressly charged the eleven apostles to go to the heathen world; that is indeed inconceivable in view of the conduct of the first apostles, which, as we know on perfectly good authority, was entirely different. But He did commit to His Church a world-wide mission for the conversion of all nations without marking out how the commission should be discharged, so that the Church could only express His final will, as is done in Matt. xxviii. 18. And there is further testimony than these closing words: there are such sayings as, “the field is the world” (Matt. xiii. 18); “ye are the light of the world” (Matt. v. 14); “wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world (Matt. xxvi. 13); “this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony to all nations” (Matt. xxiv. 14). And besides such individual sayings, it is attested by the whole of Jesus’ view of His office of judging the world, which we have soon to discuss.

#### § 4. PROPHETIC OUTLOOK

On the other hand, in order to prepare it for its task, Jesus gives the Church of His disciples a view of the experiences awaiting it in the world, which forms the transition to His prophetic declarations in the narrower sense of the word. There are dark and painful experiences before them, for which

He prepares them, in order that they may not be perplexed or led astray by them: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves" (Matt. x. 16; Luke x. 3). Harmless and defenceless, they go forth into a hostile and persecuting world, which will requite with evil their peaceable work of salvation. Especially did He prepare His disciples for the conflicts and rage which His name will kindle in the world: "Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth: I am not come to send peace, but a sword" (Matt. x. 34; Luke xii. 51). Religious dissensions, the violent contrast of the old and the new faith, will sever even the closest natural bonds, the bond between brother and brother, between children and parents. Such experiences will call for courage as well as prudence and calmness. "He that hath a purse, let him take it; and he that hath none, let him sell his garment and buy a sword," cries Jesus to His disciples in an obscure metaphor on the evening of parting; and thus He contrasts the career of conflict which is about to begin for them with the life they had lived under His protection, without trouble and without care; henceforth, He says, they must care for themselves, and bravely make their own way (Luke xxii. 35-37). But they are not to provoke the hostility and persecution of the world: "Give not that which is holy to the dogs; and cast not your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you" (Matt. vii. 6). In the world there is a roughness and commonness, there is something of the beast, which the unwise obtrusion of holy things only provokes to mockery and even to violence. Not for such men are the pearls of truth which the disciples bore. Jesus therefore counsels further: "When they persecute you in one city, flee to another." They are not to seek martyrdom, as fanatic Christians in the second century did. And again: "Be wise as serpents, but harmless as doves"; that is, learn to wind your way through the evil world, but see that your wisdom does not injure your simplicity and integrity (Matt. x. 16-23). Strong words of encouragement are attached to these dark predictions: "Ye shall be brought before governors and kings for My sake. But take no thought how or what ye shall answer: for it is not ye who speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (Matt. x. 18-20). "Ye

shall be hated of all men for My name's sake ; but fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." " Not a sparrow falls to the ground without your heavenly Father : but the very hairs of your head are all numbered " ; that is, not a hair can be injured without the will of God, who at all times has a Father's heart towards you. But the Lord predicted more terrible dangers for His children than outer persecutions. Seduction will vie with persecution, inner enemies will endanger the Church in that which is more essential than the life of the body. False prophets will enter in, like wolves in sheep's clothing, corrupt men in the garments of innocence and piety ; and it will be all the harder for the Church to discern their true character, since it is the prophet's business to bring new knowledge, and prophecy, by which new knowledge is ever being drawn from the divine source of truth, the inexhaustible gospel, is a necessity of the Church's life. Jesus in such circumstances gives His disciples a simple test for the hardest cases : " By their fruits ye shall know them. Can men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles ? " (Matt. vii. 15-20). That is to say, new knowledge and modes of teaching are worthy of confidence when they are able to bring forth the fruits of a Christian life, and when those who teach them are themselves examples of conduct. When that is not so, the Church must distrust them. But even the disciples might be led away by a faith and an enthusiasm which had no moral fruits, and therefore the Parable of the Tree which must be known by its fruits holds good even for themselves. With warning emphasis, Jesus admits no value before God, and no saving power to a faith, however orthodox or even enthusiastic and energetic it may be, if it does not furnish the proof of its genuineness in a simple fulfilling of the divine commandments. " Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven : but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven " (Matt. vii. 21 ; cf. 24-27). " Many will say to Me on that day, Have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name cast out devils, and in Thy name done many wonderful works ? And then I will profess to them, I never knew you (never had anything in common with you) : depart from me, ye that work iniquity " (Matt. vii. 22,

23). If even those are rejected who, in genuine religious enthusiasm, make a mighty impression on the world, if they do not apply the gospel to their own life, how much more are those to be rejected who have nothing more to boast of than mere outer impressions of Him: "We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets" (Luke xiii. 26, 27). Still more rigorously than in these warnings does Jesus mark the distinction between the genuine and the spurious members of His future Church in the Parable of the Tares among the Wheat (Matt. xiii. 24-30, 36-43), in which He uttered a great lesson for His Church. The Son of Man sows good seed in His field; wherever His wheat comes up, there grow children of the kingdom of heaven. But the old enemy, the spirit of selfishness and deceit, knows also how to scatter his poison in this new divine creation. He sows secretly tares and cockleweed among the wheat. These are the children of the evil one, that is, not merely nominal Christians, but hypocrites and wicked men, who under the guise of godliness do the work of Satan, deceit and hatred. We have at once something like an explanation of the presence of Judas among the disciples, a sort of prophetic protest against certain fearful and anti-christian phenomena in Church history, when the parable asks: "Hast thou not sown good seed in thy field? whence then hath it tares?" and answers by the words: "An enemy hath done it." But it would be a fatal error for the disciples of Jesus to yield to the natural temptation, and seek to put outward and arbitrary restraints upon this process, or attempt to expose and separate from each other the children of God and the children of the devil. They cannot succeed in that. The law of the present history of good and evil in the world brings into inseparable relations those born of God and those against God; even the history of the kingdom of God, the development of the Church of Christ, cannot escape this law. The day of separation comes only at the end of this world, and it will be accomplished by higher powers than the weak and fallible hands of men. To this great day, the *συντέλεια aiώνος*, Jesus finally points His disciples, even for their own sakes, as the great motive for preserving their fidelity; and in this duty of faithfulness is summed up their whole task in

work both without and within themselves, varying often in its details, of the servants of his absent lord, and tested by his absence (Luke x. 11 f.; Matt. xxv. 14 f.), Jesus never wearies of them this one duty, which includes all others. Satisfaction becomes an encouragement when the reward of the faithful is described—the harder his life on earth, the higher his place in heaven (Matt. v. 11, 12); and even the very smallest kindness shown to him on earth, even the cup of water given him because he is a disciple of Christ, shall not go unrewarded (Matt. x. 40–42). Here already on earth, in the midst of all persecution, the brotherly communion of love will compensate a hundredfold for all that is given up for Christ's sake (Matt. x. 28–30). On the other hand, it should be difficult to struggle and suffer for a cause whose victory is certain, which shall crown all who fight to the end. Not only will the gates of Hades not prevail against the Church of Jesus, but the Church, however small and feeble it is at present, will go on from victory to victory. As the mustard seed, which is the least of all seeds, grows like a tree, and stands higher than all the herbs of the garden; as the little leaven leavens the great mass of meal, and turns it to something higher, to precious bread: so the kingdom of God, even in the shape of the Church, will rise above all kingdoms of the world, and it will work in the hearts of men, and lift them to a new and higher level of existence. And as surely as seedtime is followed by harvest, so the day will come, the day of judgment, when the Church will put off all weakness and defects, and be changed into the perfect kingdom of God.

## CHAPTER VIII

## THE JUDGMENT OF THE WORLD

The declarations of Jesus about His dying and rising again, and still more, those about His Church and its future, are already of the nature of prophecy; but the doctrine which completes His teaching, His predictions of the perfected

kingdom, is entirely prophetic, and therefore it is harder to interpret than any that have gone before. Whoever seeks not merely to reproduce the imagery, but to discover the truths which Jesus meant to teach, must be bold enough to seek his way in the dark.

### § 1. AUTHENTICITY AND DIFFICULTIES

These very difficulties have recently driven men to the declaration that a great part of these eschatological discourses of Jesus is not genuine. It has become a favourite assumption among critical theologians that especially the prophetic discourse in Matt. xxiv. and its parallels did not in large measure originate with Jesus Himself; it is a short apocalypse, which, arising in the troubles before the Jewish war, was attributed to the divine *σοφία* (Luke xi. 49), and so to Jesus Himself, and thus came to find a place in the Gospels which were then taking shape.<sup>1</sup> This hypothesis has really nothing to support it; that short apocalypse is a mere production of the critical imagination; no evidence of its existence can be found. But even if it had existed it would still be inconceivable how in a circle possessed of a first-hand tradition of Jesus' words Jewish predictions of quite recent origin could at once have been accepted for genuine sayings of Jesus, and been incorporated into the Christian Gospels then being formed. The essential contents of the great prophetic discourse, Matt. xxiv., Mark xiii., Luke xxi., belong to the original document common to our Gospels, which must have been composed about the beginning of the Jewish war (cf. Mark xiii. 14; Matt. xxiv. 25). Other prophetic sayings, contained in the first and third Gospels, manifestly sprang from the apostolic collection of sayings, and therefore the descent of the synoptic prophetic addresses from Jesus' own lips is certified on as good authority as the Parables of the Kingdom or the Sermon on the Mount. The difficulties which they present to us in their traditional form must be solved in another manner and by other means than by cutting the knot, which, besides, would not remove all difficulties. They must be solved, above

<sup>1</sup> For example, Keim, *Leben Jesu*, iii. 199; Pfeiderer, *Urchristentum*, p. 402 f.

all, by remembering the peculiarity of all prophecy, and by considering how imperfect must be the prophet's own view and expression, and how imperfect also must be the hearers' comprehension and report of it. We must apply to the predictions of Jesus what Paul says of the necessary limits of all prophecy (1 Cor. xiii. 9-12); it is not a seeing face to face, but a seeing in a glass; from it, therefore, no perfect knowledge can spring, nothing but a child's thought in comparison with a man's. Even He was, in regard to the future, a prophet looking in order to learn, not God who knows all; and this He Himself expressly acknowledged in the words, too little considered, "The day and the hour knoweth no man, not even the Son, but the Father only" (Mark xiii. 32; Matt. xxiv. 36). The prophet does not see the shape of the future development, but only its idea and ideal truth; and even this he does not see as an abstract thinker, but as an inspired poet; he sees it in emblem and image, or rather, in a changing series of images, always in a riddle, as Paul says. An artist who paints the resurrection of the dead and the last judgment knows that his form is unreal, but takes it as the only form in which he can represent an idea which he believes to be true; and the prophet is subject to the same law. And if he does not write his visions down, but tells them, as Jesus did, on various occasions, and using different images, to disciples who are children in apprehension, it is evident that, however faithful the disciples are, the repetition will lead to new imperfections and errors. These errors may be corrected to-day, and the ideas contained in the images may be known, but the actual facts of the future we can no more describe than Jesus Himself could.

#### § 2. THE IDEA OF THE JUDGMENT OF THE WORLD AND OF THE OFFICE OF JUDGE OF THE WORLD

It is evident that Jesus could not be silent about the future and the completion of His kingdom. If what had happened, or was about to happen, did not exhaust the idea of the kingdom, or fulfil the word of prophecy, it was only the more necessary that by prophecy the fulness should be disclosed of which the humble fact was only the beginning.

That fulness is comprehended in the idea of the last judgment; by which Jesus did not mean merely the condemning of the bad, He meant the victory of God's cause throughout the world, and the gathering out of all evil, in order to make way for a glorious and perfect establishment of the kingdom of God (cf. Matt. xiii. 39–43, 49, 50). The idea of a closing day of the world's history, which was already current among the Jews, offered itself as the simplest pictorial view of this thought, a day on which God will disclose the final result of the world's history, and hold before every individual the eternal worth or worthlessness of his life, in order to determine his eternal destiny accordingly. Just as the Old Testament speaks of the day, the day of Jehovah, in the sense of a day of judgment, so Jesus speaks of the *ἡμέρα κρισέως*, or simply the *ἡμέρα ἐκείνη*, the last day (Matt. vii. 22, x. 15, xi. 22, xii. 36, xxiv. 36, xxv. 13, etc.). Or, in connection with the traditional distinction of two periods of the world (*αιώνες*), one reaching up to the last day, and one beginning anew with it (*αιών οὐτος—αιών ἐκεῖνος* or *μέλλων*), He speaks of a *συντέλεια αἰώνος*, of a completion of the present course of the world (Matt. xiii. 39). Once also He speaks of a *παλιγγενεσία* (Matt. xix. 28), a regeneration, viz. of the universe; for, according to Jewish expectations, the present order of the world must end with the *αιών οὐτος*, and must be replaced by a new and more glorious one, a new heaven and a new earth. In all this Jesus said nothing new to His disciples, but only confirmed in them views and expectations which had already grown up in the pious circles of the people on the basis of Old Testament prophecy. On the other hand, it must have been a new and surprising idea to them that in His utterances about the last day He claimed for Himself the office of Judge. The popular expectations did not look for Messiah as Judge of the world. They did, indeed, ascribe to the Messiah that historical judgment on the heathen world for which they longed, that shattering of the world-dominion of the heathen (Ps. ii. 8, 9) by which the way should be opened for the Messianic kingdom upon earth; but this Messianic victory was different from the final judgment upon the living and the dead, which stood apart from the history of the world, and was reserved for the last day. Where that final

judgment was looked for God Himself was Judge.<sup>1</sup> Now it certainly was not the intention of Jesus to deny this to God, but He knew that He was called as God's instrument to this office. Sometimes, indeed, God is conceived as the Judge proper, and the Messiah as crown witness or assessor, on whose testimony, as to whether the person to be judged belongs to Him or not, the divine decision depends (Matt. x. 32, 33; Luke ~~xviii~~<sup>xxii</sup>. 8).<sup>2</sup> But, for the most part, He Himself appears, even formally, as the Judge proper of the world. "The Son of Man will come with His holy angels, and reward every man according to his works" (Matt. xvi. 27). "He will say to His angels, Bind for me the tares in bundles to be burned" (Matt. xiii. 30, 41). On that day He will say to those who have falsely called Him Lord, Lord: "I know you not" (Matt. vii. 21). He will open to His faithful ones the door to the eternal festival of joy, but will close the door of the heavenly marriage feast on the unfaithful (Matt. vii. 22, 23, xxv. 11, 12; Luke xiii. 25, etc.). "He will sit on the throne of His glory, and all nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" (Matt. xxv. 31). The idea so variously portrayed is only strange at first sight, but is really quite simple and clear; it seals Christianity as the absolute religion. If Christ were only a finger-post to God along with others who could likewise lead men to the goal of their destiny, or if He were only the beginner and not also the finisher of the kingdom of God, beyond whom there can be no development, then, indeed, the very idea of His office as Judge of the world would be a fanatical presumption.<sup>3</sup> But if the Father has delivered all things to Him (Matt. xi. 27), and His whole revelation of salvation, then is Christ also the born Judge of the world. He is Judge, first, as the perfectly holy standard by which the eternal worth or

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, Div. ii. vol. ii. p. 182.

<sup>2</sup> In the latter passage, where the confessing before men is contrasted with the confessing before angels, the angels are conceived as the representatives of God, as the heavenly tribunal before which the Messiah will appear as a witness. The change of image does not prejudice the identity of the idea that the judgment is executed by Him.

<sup>3</sup> Strauss, in his *Life of Jesus for the German People*, p. 242, regards the idea as one that cannot critically be set aside.

worthlessness of all historical phenomena must finally be measured; and He is Judge, further, as the gracious Helper and Saviour, through whom God makes the attainment of His eternal destiny possible to every man who is called, so that in the judgment of the world by Christ we have the great thought that God will finally reject no man because he is a sinner, but only because he has rejected Him who could and would help him out of sin.

### § 3. THE IDEA OF THE RETURN IN GLORY

This sense that He was called to be the Judge of the world explains to us, what is perhaps the most peculiar and the most obscure element of Christ's prophecy, the idea of His second coming, or in the common Greek expression (Matt. xxiv. 27), His Parousia. According to Matt. xvi. 27, and several other sayings, Jesus expected to come again in glory in order to judge the world and to render to every man according to his works.<sup>1</sup> The idea was strange to the Jewish Messianic expectations, which knew of nothing but a single coming of Messiah; but to Jesus it came readily with the evidence that He must die before His work was completed. The sower, says a comparatively early parable, after having done his work does not remain standing in his field as though he could wait for the harvest, but goes home and sleeps and wakes many nights and many days till the harvest is ripe, then he comes again to put in the sickle (Mark iv. 26–29). The idea of the second coming appears more distinctly from the time that Jesus has clearly before Him His rejection by Israel and His approaching death of violence. It appears even in connection with His first prophecy of His approaching death (Mark viii. 38; Matt. xvi. 27; Luke ix. 26), and from that time onwards the image of His glorious second coming to judgment,

<sup>1</sup> When Wendt (pp. 553, 554) seeks to limit the office of Jesus as Judge of the world to those who directly or indirectly come into contact with Him and His preaching, while the past generations are judged by God Himself without Christ's mediation, his position is in contradiction with the teaching of the whole New Testament. Cf. besides the passages quoted above, Matt. xvi. 27; John v. 22–27; Acts xvii. 30; Rom. ii. 16; 1 Pet. iv. 5, 6, etc.

for which the expression parousia (that is, simply advent) seems to have been coined even in the apostolic circles (Matt. xxiv. 3 ; 2 Thess. ii. 8 ; 1 John ii. 28), appears in more and more detail throughout the prophetic sayings and parables. It is described as an event taking place with accompaniments of great power and glory, the glory of His Father in the midst of His holy angels (Matt. xvi. 27), especially in the clouds of heaven (Matt. xxiv. 30, xxvi. 64 ; cf. Acts i. 11 ; Rev. i. 7). The latter reminds us of the repeated Old Testament delineations of Jehovah riding on the storm-clouds of judgment (cf. Ps. xviii. 8 f., l. 3, xcvi. 2), still more of the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven (Dan. vii. 13). The expressions in Matt. xxiv. 30, xxvi. 64, especially make manifest the supreme importance of that passage in Daniel for producing the whole imagery of Jesus. This picture of victory and triumph must have arisen in the soul of Jesus as soon as the frightful and ignominious issue of His historical mission appeared before Him, while He yet remained certain of His God and God-given commission. He will seem to be overcome, and yet He will, in fact, obtain the victory. He will again enter in triumph into the world which expels Him as an evil-doer; Him whom it rejected as Saviour, it will once more see as its Judge. In presence of His death upon the cross He declares to His earthly judges : "Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Matt. xxvi. 64).

#### § 4. THE FINAL PICTURE OF THE JUDGMENT OF THE WORLD

A gloomy picture of the history of the world in its closing stage forms the foreground to this promise of the parousia. A distress unequalled will immediately precede the second coming of Messiah (Matt. xxiv. 21). The disciples of Jesus will be hated by all the world for His name's sake; the unrighteousness of the world and the oppression of believers will reach their climax (Matt. xxiv. 9, 12). The love of many disciples will wax cold; they will go astray, and hate and betray one another (Matt. xxiv. 10, 12). Others will fall into fanatical errors; false prophets and saviours will appear, seeking to win faith for themselves by signs and wonders, and

will declare the return of Christ the end of time, so that if it were possible even the elect must be deceived. But they are not to believe these fanatical assurances, not even regard as signs of the end of the world the universal convulsions in the history of the world, wars, earthquakes, and pestilence. One sign alone is sure, that the gospel must be preached in the whole world for a witness to all nations, that the message of salvation must do its work in the world of history (Matt. xxiv. 4, 7, 14). In those days will God's attitude towards His Church appear like that of an unrighteous judge who refuses to do justice to a poor, shamefully persecuted widow. But the Church, like that widow, should not desist from importuning the eternal Judge, who will at last be moved to procure her help suddenly (Luke xviii. 1-8). So will the day of the Lord be delayed for the waiting and persecuted; but at length it will come suddenly, for the days of the great affliction will suddenly be shortened for the elect's sake (Matt. xxiv. 22). It will come when it is least looked for, as a thief in the night (Matt. xxiv. 29, 43; Luke xii. 39, 40). It will break upon the Jewish people while they are in the hottest persecution of the disciples of Jesus (Matt. x. 23). All at once, the abomination of desolation will appear in the holy city, as predicted in the Book of Daniel (Matt. xxiv. 15), and will announce the fall of the desecrated Jerusalem; for "wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together," the vultures who tear it to pieces (Matt. xxiv. 15, 28).<sup>1</sup> It will break upon the world at the very moment when it feels most secure, as the Flood came in the days of Noah, and as the rain of fire in the days of Lot. Men will be planting and building, buying and selling, marrying and giving in marriage, when all at once the judgment will fall on them (Matt. xxiv. 37, 39; Luke xvii. 26 f.). And so the second coming of the Lord appears as a sudden catastrophe in the world and in history, which redeems those who are ready but devours those who are not ready, even though they belong

<sup>1</sup> We are reminded of the events in Palestine which followed one another in the years between sixty and seventy, the persecution in which James the Just and others fell a sacrifice, the scenes of uproar and party slaughter in Jerusalem and the temple, and the Roman eagles which completed the judgment on the nation which had morally become a corpse.

to the Church (Luke xvii. 32 f.; Matt. xxiv. 40–42)—a catastrophe in which those only stand who with singleness of heart seek for the salvation of their souls, and who do not look back like Lot's wife on the earthly things which they have to leave (Luke xvii. 31, 33; cf. Matt. xxiv. 16).<sup>1</sup> But however sudden this catastrophe may be, it will be quite manifest and unmistakable. The Church should not therefore put any faith in fanatical assurances that Christ is here or there, in the desert or in an inner chamber (that is, in a corner), because His actual coming to judgment will be as powerful and startling as when “the lightning flashes from one end of heaven to the other” (Matt. xxiv. 25–27). The sun and moon will pale before “the sign of the Son of Man” appearing in the heavens; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken (Matt. xxiv. 29, 30); the sea and the waves will roar, and an unspeakable suspense will seize men regarding the things that are coming (Luke xxi. 25, 26). And then will they all see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, attended by His holy angels, in His power and glory, and will beat their breasts in the consciousness of their guilt as they recognise in Him their Judge (Matt. xxiv. 30; Mark xiii. 26; Luke xxi. 27). But He will send forth His angels with loud sounding trumpets to gather His elect from the four winds, not merely the living, but—as the trumpet with its awakening call signifies—those also who sleep in the bosom of the earth (cf. 1 Thess. iv. 16); for then shall be gathered the whole Church of the elect to share in His kingly glory, and be united with Him in judging the world (cf. Matt. xix. 28; Luke xxii. 30; 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3).

### § 5. THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

The thoroughly poetical character of this picture of the end of the world is clear as day. It is not history such as ever has or will take place in bare fact; it is ideal history evolved from the idea that the contrasts of good and evil,

<sup>1</sup> The exhortations which Matthew interprets literally, and refers to the flight of the Christians in the siege of Jerusalem, were probably at first meant in the symbolic sense in which Luke xvii. has strikingly repeated them.

wheat and tares, must ripen in the world, and that when the opposition to God in the world has reached its climax, the judgment of God must break out over it. And yet this conception, which alone is true to the nature of all genuine prophecy, gives rise to doubt, for in Christ's discourses the epic of ideal prophecy is mixed up with the Jewish wars and the destruction of Jerusalem. Have we not here the prediction of a definite historical event, and must we not regard the whole as a foretelling of actual history? And if we are compelled to take it thus, is not the whole prediction false, as the destruction of Jerusalem took place without involving such a universal disturbance of the history of the world, and especially without bringing with it the judgment of the world? It cannot honestly be denied that the first evangelist has identified the catastrophe breaking upon Israel in the years between sixty and seventy, with the last affliction and the crisis of the crisis of the history of the world, and has attached the immediate signs of Christ's return to judge the world with a *εὐθέως μερί* to the destruction of Jerusalem (Matt. xxiv. 16, 21, 29); and if Mark and Luke strive to relax somewhat this connection, they only show how embarrassed they were by the picture furnished in their common source. Moreover, Jesus also (Matt. x. 23) incontestably makes the return of the Son of Man coincide with the historical catastrophe of the Jewish nation; in Matt. xvi. 28 there is likewise given a saying of Jesus, which in its natural sense directly assures some of the listening disciples that they will live to see His coming again to judgment (ver. 27);<sup>1</sup> and, finally, in the three repetitions of that great eschatological discourse, the words appear: ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη, ὡς ἂν πάντα ταῦτα γένηται (Matt. xxiv. 34; Mark xiii. 30; Luke xxi. 32). In accordance with this, as we may see from the whole New Testament, the early Church expected the Lord's return within a generation, and even hoped themselves to see it (cf. Jas. v. 3, 9; 1 Pet. iv. 7; Rom. xiii. 11; 1 Cor. vii. 29 f., xv. 51, 52; Rev. i. 1, xxii. 12, etc.). At this point, then, the seemingly invincible difficulties of the eschatological

<sup>1</sup> Mark has indeed (ix. 1) changed the words—offence manifestly being given by them; but even John xxi. 22, 23 must be taken as an echo of them.

discourses of Jesus become acute, and appearances strongly favour the view that Jesus, seeing the judgment of God coming upon Israel and Jerusalem, and having reason to expect it within a generation, conformed to the Jewish view of the world, and contemplated the catastrophe of Judaism in immediate connection with the catastrophe of the world. But though such a view would be conceivable in a national Jewish prophet who considered Israel and Jerusalem the pivot of the history of the world, there are very weighty reasons against it in the case of Jesus, apart from dogmatic considerations. First, that well-attested saying, which as a confession of Messianic ignorance is proof against suspicion of later falsification : "The day and the hour knoweth no man, not even the Son" (Mark xiii. 32 and parallels). This saying cannot be reconciled with the other which stands naively beside it, "This generation shall not pass away till all these things shall be fulfilled," by making it mean that Jesus disclaimed only the power of fixing the year or the day, but approximately placed it within a generation. Though the editor of the prophetic sayings in Matt. xxiv., Mark xiii., may have in this way quieted himself about the contradiction, an interpretation of day and hour so insipid and so alien to the prophetic style is inconceivable in the mind of Jesus. The conjecture rather forces itself upon us that the two declarations, which exclude each other, referred originally to two different objects of prophecy, the words, "day and hour knoweth no man" to the time of the judgment of the world, the words "this generation will not pass away" to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. Jesus elsewhere deals very differently with the two future events. He says most decidedly of the judgment of God on Jerusalem, "it will come upon this generation" (Matt. xxiii. 36). It is to Him essential that the generation which will fill up the measure of the sins of the fathers, will also have to taste the full measure of the divine wrath (cf. Matt. xxiii. 34-39; Luke xi. 50, 51, xiii. 1-9, xxiii. 28-31). But He Himself speaks quite differently of the end of the world in Matt. xxiv. He warns against hasty expectations ; He insists that wars and rumours of wars, and the rising of one people against another, by no means signify that the end is near, and He only allows one fact to be

seriously regarded as a sign of the end, viz. that the gospel has been preached to all nations. Did He confine the accomplishment of that world-wide task to one generation? We have express evidence of the contrary. In the Parable of the Vineyard (Mark xii. 1-12; Matt. xxi. 33-46; Luke xx. 9-18) it is said in conclusion, "The lord of the vineyard will miserably destroy those wicked men, and commit his vineyard to others who will render him the fruits in their season," that is, to the Gentiles, or the Christian Church detached from the Jewish commonwealth. And in the Parable of the Marriage Supper of the King's Son, which immediately follows in Matthew, the rejection of the gospel on the part of the Jewish authorities passing into open hostility, and the divine judgment which that calls forth, are described in words which unmistakably allude to the destruction of Jerusalem (Matt. xxii. 7). But after the punishment of the "city of murderers" the end, the judgment of the world does not follow, but messengers are sent forth anew to call in the people from the streets and lanes, that is, the Gentiles, instead of the unworthy guests; and only after this has been done, and the house is full, does the king come in to see his guests and expel the unworthy; that is, only then does the judgment of the world begin. According to this, the spirit of Jesus clearly saw beyond the near judgment of God on Judaism, not the immediate end of the world, but a growing history both of the world and the Church, the greatest fact of which should be the calling of the nations of the world to the kingdom of God. But if that is so, how are we to explain the traditional form of His utterances about the parousia as set forth above, which fix His second coming within one generation? and how are we to explain the view held by the whole apostolic age?

#### § 6. THE PAROUSIA AS A HISTORICAL PROCESS

The consideration of this question may perhaps lead us deeper into the understanding of the thoughts of Jesus about His second coming. The synoptic tradition has preserved to us a remarkable saying of Jesus before the Sanhedrim which does not fit into the conception of His second coming as following close upon the destruction of Jerusalem: *ἀπ' ἡμέρᾳ ὅψεσθε*

*τὸν νιὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καθημένον ἐκ δεξιῶν τῆς δυνάμεως καὶ ἐρχόμενον ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ* (Matt. xxvi. 64; cf. Mark xiv. 62; Luke xxii. 69). In the first place, these words put beyond doubt what we might have supposed from their prophetic style and their derivation from Dan. vii. 13, that the second coming of Jesus in the clouds of heaven is not a visible coming from the visible heavens. The coming in the clouds of heaven would no more be seen with the bodily eye than His sitting at the right hand of power. But as the *ἀπ' ἄρτι* (whose meaning is also confirmed by Luke) refers assuredly to both the participles dependent on *δύεσθε*, Jesus here describes His coming in the clouds of heaven as something of which His deadly enemies are to become sensible, "henceforth," that is, immediately after His apparent defeat, as something that from the time of His death is to affect the whole history of the world. When His judges and murderers, the authorities of Israel, are compelled to note a few weeks after His death that their victory was but a seeming one, that He who was ignominiously slain by them lives and rules from heaven, and that He has returned with spiritual power to the world from which they fondly imagined they had expelled Him for ever, then would they see Him coming in the clouds of heaven, and sitting at the right hand of power. This idea of His second coming, so startlingly prominent in this passage, the thought of it as a triumphant return to the world which had expelled Him—a return beginning from His death and advancing from victory to victory—may not, perhaps, have been so clearly and distinctly before the soul of Jesus from the first. The thought of His second coming in glory was called up in His soul by the other thought of His shameful death, and so it may have appeared to Him as belonging to an indefinite but not a remote future, and embracing, though under a veil, all that should come after His death to perfect His work on earth; and many of His prophetic words above alluded to may have been conceived and spoken before this new thought had fully taken shape. But as He revolved this idea in His mind, and the historical fulfilment of it came nearer, it became more fully developed and more distinct, so far as that is possible in a prophetic view; the indefinite point extends into a line in which a beginning and an end

with something lying between may be distinguished. In other words, Jesus comprehended the realisation of the kingdom of God, which is generally represented by the prophets as momentary, like a flash of lightning, rather as a process of growth, a historical development; and according to the same law He consciously viewed also the future completion of His work as a course of history, achieved not in a single act, but in an advancing series of acts. Testimonies to this may be found also in addresses to the disciples only inferior in importance to those last words before the Sanhedrim. The repeated proverbial statement, "Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together," manifestly expresses a general law which is fulfilled in the history of the world, not once but again and again; and the way in which Jesus (Luke xvii. 37) answers the question of the disciples, *ποῦ κύριε, οὗτοῦ τοῦ νιόυ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου;*, of which the disciples in their future applications would fain see even one, cannot, according to grammar and context, be the past days of the Messiah on earth, but must be the future judicial *ἡμέρα* in the plural. And this attests the presentiment of Jesus, that more than one judgment day of God and of His anointed is coming; that the future history of the world will be filled with such epochs, in which the triumphant glory of the Son of Man, and the impotence and nothingness of all world-powers coming into conflict with Him, will be made clear. Certain main elements of that future course of history must now have stood out prominently in the consciousness of Jesus; the triumphant issuing of His life from death, and its immediate entrance into the life of His Church; further, His triumph in the world, Judaism breaking down before Him on the one hand, and heathendom opening itself to Him on the other; lastly, the final overcoming of all powers opposed to God, of evil and death, and the setting up of God's eternal kingdom. All these essential elements of His triumphant progress, in which, stage after stage, the world opposed to God is judged, were wrapped up as in a seed in Jesus' simplest view of His

coming; all could be conceived and predicted under this one name. But, under the conditions of all prophecy, each stage was not seen as something apart, they were felt and described as so many phases of the whole according to the suggestion of the moment. And this made the description necessarily imperfect, and even the sense of words was not always the same.

#### § 7. THE ORIGINAL STATE OF THINGS AND THE TRADITIONAL FORM

The traces of this state of things may probably be made out step by step; at least this presupposition sets at rest the most pressing difficulties. Those words before the Sanhedrim, *διπτι δψεσθε, κ.τ.λ.*, permit the conjecture that Jesus already saw the facts of Easter and Pentecost as belonging to His parousia. They were, in fact, the glorious beginning of His triumphant return; not merely a revelation of glory to His own, but a virtual judgment of His enemies, who in the manifest indestructibility of this murdered man must feel that their enmity was vain, and was indeed enmity against God. The farewell discourses in John give notable evidence that the predictions of Easter and Pentecost found a place in His thought of the parousia. But even in the Synoptists a saying such as Matt. xvi. 28, "There be some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom," may have been originally intended simply to assure the disciples, whom He had summoned to accompany Him on His way to death, that some of them, at anyrate, should not be entangled in His doom, but should live to see the beginning of His course of victory and triumph.<sup>1</sup> The approaching catastrophe of Israel must have been, above all, significant to Jesus as a further element of this victorious and triumphant progress. That the Jewish commonwealth should perish because of the rejection of its Messiah, and that the final judgment of the Old Testament covenant history must follow close upon the outrageous rejection of the last and greatest visitation of God, was a necessity of the moral order of the world which Jesus could not fail to observe, and which

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the paraphrase of the words in Mark ix. 1.

for the sake of His growing Church He durst not leave unexpressed ; for His desire was to detach the Church in spirit from the old national communion, and so to preserve it in the decisive moment from being entangled in the nation's fate. But this fate was also a significant revelation of His glory ; the Jewish nation perished because of its rejection of Him as a Saviour, and thus He was its Judge, and His cause came triumphantly out of the flames of that destruction like a phoenix from its ashes. It is not therefore surprising if, in the words of Matt. x. 23, "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man come," He described the catastrophe of Jerusalem, which should put an end to all Jewish persecution, as a coming of the Son of Man. He it was, to speak in the style of the prophets, who rode over the perishing Jerusalem in the clouds of heaven. But over these ruins He victoriously entered into the nations of the great Gentile world, and that was the other and fairer side of His triumph in the world. The conquest of the heathen world by the gospel is also presented as a judgment of the world by Him. The powers and spirits which hitherto have ruled the world were discovered before Him in their impotence and their opposition to God. And perhaps the magnificent passage which is in Matt. xxiv. 29 brought into close connection by the difficult word *εὐθέως*, with the reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, is, in its original sense, simply a prophetic description of His judicial triumph over the old world. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heaven shall be shaken : and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven : and all tribes of the earth shall mourn, and shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Has not that already been fulfilled in the history of the world ? It has been fulfilled, as all the lights of heaven which formerly shone on humanity have paled before the rising on them of the sign of the cross, as ideas which seemed to stand firm as the stars, and ordinances which had been maintained for centuries as laws of the world, lost their authority, and the knowledge of Jesus as the King of Heaven made its way in the self-accusing hearts of men as a higher power of

renewal. Certainly the narrator who gave the saying the form and the place it has did not think of a new spiritual revolution in the world, but of that final palingenesia (Matt. xix. 28) by which the new heavens and the new earth were to be set up. And perhaps both, the spiritual and the cosmical renewing of the world, originally presented themselves in an emblem which suggested both to the prophetic eye of Jesus, who saw "in a glass and in riddles." But if we have rightly read the predictions of Jesus about His own parousia, the traditional form in which they lie before us in the synoptic Gospels is perfectly explained. The disciples could not possibly understand aright what was still unfulfilled, and the idea of the parousia as a point of time indefinite but near, remained the most comprehensible. The view of it as a process of development which only gradually took shape in Jesus Himself had not clearly risen on them. It was all the harder for them to grasp, as it broke up the pictorial idea of the last day as the end of the world. That second coming of Jesus which took place at Easter and Pentecost, when it was no longer for the disciples a bit of prophecy but a historical event, received other and more definite names,<sup>1</sup> and so ceased to belong to the idea of the parousia. On the other hand, the destruction of Jerusalem and the conversion of the Gentile world remained in their eyes the great signals and symbols of the historical triumph of Jesus, and with these was connected the expectation of His speedy and complete victory in the final judgment. Their expectation was all the more impatient, as Jesus Himself had given no measure of time, and had not kept the future events distinct. The longing to see shortly the last revelation of God naturally carried the thoughts to the furthest points as though they were near, and this soaring beyond the historical development appeared to be the more justified by the fact that the Old Testament prophets had not at all distinguished between the founding and completion of the Messianic kingdom. Thus all the events of the future were crowded into the measure of one generation, and grouped around the central point formed by

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the repeated synoptic predictions of Jesus as to His death and resurrection, which (*ex eventu*) sound quite unmistakable, and yet were repeatedly misunderstood by the disciples.

the catastrophe of the Jewish nation, which was to the disciples from childhood the pivot of the world's history. And yet the tradition even with such misunderstandings and confusions was faithful enough to preserve the traces of the original state of things.<sup>1</sup>

#### § 8. THE FUTURE JUDGMENT

One part of the ideas contained in the pictorial representation of the last day thus resolves itself into a historical process in the sense of the poet's words, "The history of the world is the judgment of the world." Certainly only a part. Those words of the poet have, in the case of Jesus, only a relative, not an absolute truth; for that historical judgment of the world concerns only the generations that continue living on the earth, not the innumerable host of the dead who have withdrawn from the world and its history; and it does not lead up to the final aim of all prophecy, the completed and eternal kingdom of God. And therefore beyond all days of the Son of Man in the course of history, there still remains the image of a last day which comes at the close of the history of the world, and which includes the dead as well as the living. A new series of prophetic pictures on this point disclose themselves in the discourses of Jesus which naturally pass beyond the limits of history. The Son of Man sits as King on the throne of His glory, and all nations are gathered before Him in order to be separated by Him into two groups, one on His right hand and the other on His left, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats (Matt. xxv. 31 f.). Along with the contemporaries of Jesus appear those of a long past time, the people of Nineveh from the time of Jonah, the Queen of Sheba from the days of Solomon (Matt. xii. 41, 42; Luke xi. 31, 32); even the people of Sodom and Gomorrah,

<sup>1</sup> It is worthy of note that in the prophetic discourse Luke xvii., which undoubtedly sprang from the logia of Matthew, the catastrophe of Jerusalem is not at all mentioned. The redaction of the great prophetic discourse as made up from the original sources seems first to have combined these elements of the discourse with the predictions about Jerusalem, and to have referred many things to this latter theme which did not originally belong to it (Matt. xiii., xxiv.; Luke xxi.).

cities that perished thousands of years ago, receive their sentence along with Chorazin and Bethsaida, the contemporaries of Jesus (Matt. xi. 20, 24; Luke x. 12). The enemies of the King of Heaven, who would not that this man should reign over them, are judged (Luke xix. 27); but His own servants, too, are judged, according as they have been faithful or unfaithful in His service (Luke xix. 22 f.; Matt. xxv. 14–30). The children of Israel are judged (Matt. xix. 28); the heathen also, who knew Jesus so little on earth that they could ask Him, "Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered or athirst or in prison and have not served Thee?" (Matt. xxv. 37 f.); and the confessors of Jesus are judged, who "prophesied in His name, and in His name cast out devils, and in His name had done many wonderful works," but yet had not observed the simple holy will of God (Matt. vii. 22, 23). Nay, believers who, as represented in the Parable of the Ten Virgins, went forth to meet Him with the lamp of faith and love burning, but neglected to nourish the holy flame and so keep it alive, are judged. Beside the manifold pictures of the heavenly reward—"enter thou into the joy of thy Lord; be thou over ten cities," etc.—appear the symbols of future penal judgments: exclusion from the heavenly festival of joy, casting out into the dark prison in which are weeping and gnashing of teeth. The fire of hell is also spoken of, and the worm that never dies, the fire that is never quenched (cf. Matt. viii. 12, 13, 42, 50, xviii. 8, 9; Mark ix. 47, 48). The traditional conception associates all that with one day of decision, and one act of decision at the close of the world's history, a day and act which will reduce the whole infinite variety of earthly life to the one alternative of eternal blessedness or eternal damnation. This view of the last day, which is not peculiar to Christianity, but was taken over from Judaism, has unquestionably points of support in the sayings of Jesus, but is it really the right key to His views of the coming judgment?

#### § 9. IMPOSSIBILITY OF MAINTAINING THE USUAL CONCEPTION

It is strange that when we attempt to apply seriously the idea of an actual final judgment, with absolute decisions,

to the picture of the future judgment sketched by Jesus, it melts away in our hands. That majestic delineation (Matt. xxv. 31-46), where the whole of humanity is assigned either to eternal salvation or eternal destruction, is, as a rule, taken for a picture of that final judgment; and even the evangelist, as his introduction and conclusion show, has taken it in that sense. But can that have been the original meaning of Jesus? How are we to harmonise with all the rest of His teaching the notion that some works of love done or not done to His brethren should decide the eternal destiny of all men and nations? The paragraph is not a picture of the final judgment as such, but only illustrates one particular aspect of the divine judgment. It is only a peculiarly magnificent expression of the idea more briefly expressed in Matt. x. 42, that no proof of love which is shown or refused to His disciples in their mission to the world shall be unrewarded or unpunished. There are other aspects of the divine judgment which are as little able to lead to eternal blessedness or damnation. Thus Matt. xii. 37: "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." We might ask, is it not, according to Matt. xxv., by the doing or not doing of works of mercy? is it not, according to Matt. xvi. 27, vii. 21-24, by works, by doing or not doing the will of God in all things? is it not, according to Matt. x. 32, 33, confessing or denying Christ before men? Who does not see that it is impossible for Jesus to surrender a man to condemnation owing to an idle word of which he cannot give account at the last day? (Matt. xii. 36). In this whole saying He desires only to insist on the moral responsibility which belongs to a man's words as well as to his works,—words which are often treated so lightly, although they testify to the state of a man's heart quite as much, and often more directly, than his actions do. Our traditional exposition has thus been far too hasty with its monstrous idea of eternal damnation. Who does not feel the harshness which lies in the application of it to those foolish virgins who knock too late at the door of the house where the marriage is, and cry: "Lord, Lord, open unto us"? Or who could fail to observe the distinction which the Parable of the Intrusted Pounds makes between the punishment of the slothful servant and

the mutinous dependant? To interpret that prison where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, not as a strict judgment of God, but as eternal rejection by God, leads to strange conclusions. In Matt. v. 25, 26 it is said, "Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him; lest he deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the last farthing." The man, so a crude interpretation concludes here, cannot pay the first, not to speak of the last farthing of his debt before God, and therefore the words here refer to eternal damnation. But it would scatter to the winds the whole gospel of Jesus to ascribe to Him the doctrine that a single offence which was not atoned for in due time on earth hands a man over to eternal destruction. What Jesus in this metaphor desires to make men feel is the great distinction which exists between expiated and unexpiated wrong to our neighbour as regards our own inner life. If the wrong is repented of, apologised for and repaired, then that saying holds good, "Where there is no accuser there is no judge." God then does not enter into judgment with us inwardly. But if it remains unatoned, and offender or offended passes over into eternity, then will God in all strictness enter into judgment with the guilty, and he will be made to taste the bitterness of the due feeling of guilt either in this world or the next. But if we are thus to understand the debtor's prison and the judgment upon idle words, and if, on the other hand, we understand in this sense the reward declared on the last day for single acts of kindness, we are surely driven to see that what Jesus calls the judgment of the last day must include a great variety of relative decisions of all degrees before men come face to face with that final and absolute decision—eternal life or eternal torment.

#### § 10. PROOF OF CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT IN THE WORLD TO COME

It may be said that the whole sense of Jesus' teaching forces us to this perception. If, on the one hand, only the pure in heart can see God (Matt. v. 8); and if we must be perfect as

the Father in heaven is perfect before we are fit to share in the completed kingdom of God (Matt. v. 20, 48); and if, on the other hand, only one sin is unpardonable, blaspheming against the Holy Spirit, mockery of the holy truth which the heart has known, and the power of God,—how could the decision of that future tribunal on those who appear before it in neither state of heart fall on either side of that dread alternative? But the positive proof for the contrary is found on all sides in the declarations of Jesus, if only we pay attention to it. How definitely is the rejection of Israel announced more than once, its banishment into the dark prison where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt. viii. 12), and yet the sharpest of such prophetic words closes with the intimation that even for Israel an hour will come when it will cry believably to its Messiah, "Blessed is He who cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. xxiii. 37–39). Still more plain and comforting run the judicial words about the heathen world: "If such deeds had been done in Tyre and Sidon, nay, in Sodom and Gomorrah, they had repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you that it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, and even for Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment than for you" (Matt. xi. 20–24; Luke x. 13, 14). Here one asks in vain what a more tolerable eternal damnation can be? The idea only becomes possible when the punishment—just as we found it should be taken in Matt. v. 25, 26—is thought of as a finite one. The same idea of the limited and transitory punishment in the other world lies in principle directly before us in the declaration, Luke xii. 47, 48: "He that knoweth his master's will and doeth that which is worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he who knoweth it not and doeth what is worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." From the connection in which it stands the saying is thoroughly eschatological. It speaks of the punishment "on that day," but what can one think of an eternal damnation which consists of only a few stripes? A limited and passing punishment, however, naturally becomes a chastisement or means of improvement, and so there logically springs from the idea of a future judgment which is in a measure relative, the idea that there may be development and conversion in

the world to come. And that may be proved on other grounds. Jesus implies that Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah, would have willingly repented if only they had had in their day such means of grace, such signs of Christ, as Chorazin and Bethsaida enjoyed. Surely it follows from the righteousness of Him who does not seek to reap where He has not sown (Luke xix. 21), from the mercy of God who willeth not that one of the least of these should perish (Matt. xviii. 14), that that full revelation of God in Christ which would have brought about their conversion on earth will yet be offered them in the world to come. And for all who need it, this is already implied in the thought that God judges the world by Christ. That God judges the world by Christ means, that He places the life of everyone in the holy light of His perfect revelation in Christ, and thus He ratifies His judgment in each case by the witness of conscience (Rom. ii. 15, 16). But how is this possible unless this revelation of God in Christ is brought near to those in the world to come who did not know it on earth ? Finally, our idea is confirmed in the most positive way by the words about the sin against the Holy Ghost which cannot be forgiven, "neither in this world nor that which is to come" (Matt. xii. 32). This addition would not only be idle and meaningless if in that world forgiveness were utterly impossible, but since the only unpardonable sin requires that a man have first experienced the love of God in Christ, before anyone can be finally cast away there must have been the closest approach to his heart of the gospel. If all this is correct, then it follows, according to Jesus, that there is in the silent world of the departed a law similar in every respect to that which rules in the history of the world as it moves forward on the earth. The judgment of God in Christ runs through both as punishment in order to save, and the day of judgment, in the eschatological sayings of Jesus, is a symbol of the idea that all, whether good or evil, that human life contains, must finally come into the full light of divine revelation and be felt in its true worth by the man himself; that there must come a day in which the man is weighed in God's unerring balance.

### § 11. THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

One special article of eschatological expectation in which the riddle of the last day, so far solved, once more presents itself, is the resurrection of the dead. The views of Judaism about it were very much divided. The Sadducees denied any continued existence after death at all. The Essenes and Alexandrians limited it to a continued existence of the soul. The Pharisaic belief in a bodily resurrection was dominant, but was divided again into two different notions, the one expecting a general resurrection of the dead, some to everlasting life and some to everlasting shame and contempt (Dan. xii. 2), the other expecting a resurrection of the righteous only, the wicked abiding in death. Both, however, meant by resurrection that the earthly body should be restored and made immortal, and both placed it in connection with the expected glorification of all nature at the last day (cf. John xi. 24; Rom. viii. 19–23). Until then it was thought that the souls of the departed were in Sheol or Hades, a place of blessedness or woe, a Paradise or a Gehenna, but still awaiting the final decision and consummation of their lot. These notions Jesus adopted, as has already been said; but in so doing He spiritualised them, and treated them solely as true symbols of religious ideas. It is surprising how little weight He lays on bodily death from the first; how the idea of the true life in antithesis to the life of the body deprives dying of its significance to His mind. "Fear not him who kills the body, and is not able to kill the soul," He exclaims to His disciples (Matt. x. 28); "but fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." For Him the true life of man is connected with the soul and not with the body; and even the soul has not life in itself, but only in God. If it does not live to Him, if it seeks to live in itself and for itself, it comes under the power of death; but if it surrenders itself for His sake, then it enters into true life. "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it (*ἀπολέσει*); and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall preserve it" (*ζωγονήσει*). Luke xvii. 30; cf. Mark viii. 35; Matt. x. 39, xvi. 25. According to this the future condition is regarded by Jesus as proceeding organically and with logical necessity from the

present. This inner connection, represented in contrasts, forms the real kernel of the Parable of the Rich Man and Poor Lazarus. The rich man, whose earthly life is spent in clothing himself in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day, in the other world, where sensuous joys are unknown, can only be tormented with vain longings. The poor man was a genuine Lazarus (God is my help), and had learned to seek and find his help in God amid the miseries of earth ; and as the pearl grows within the diseased mussel, so there was formed within him the pearl of a life which must be seen in its spiritual beauty when appearances have ceased and truth appears. As in this passage the dead do not seem to be disembodied or wholly out of relation to the external world, so Jesus does not insist, on the other hand, on the restoration of a body at the resurrection. Not only does He not speak of a restoration of the earthly body such as was expected by the Jews, the point of His answer to the question of the Sadducees lies in His rejection of such a notion. "In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage"—they are as little fitted for begetting children as for dying again ; they are, it is said in Luke xx. 35, as the angels. Even if this suggests the notion that angels have some sort of spiritual body and are raised above the distinction of sex, it is at anyrate the case that the centre of gravity in Jesus' idea of the resurrection lies elsewhere than in the question of corporeity. To Him the idea of the resurrection coincides essentially with the idea of life in the full sense of the word, life in God. For this is His proof of the resurrection : God calls Himself in the presence of Moses centuries after the death of the patriarchs, "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." "But He is not the God of the dead, but of the living." He whose God He is, and who abides in communion with Him, lives though he were long dead. Still more remarkable, in the same train of thought, is the phrase which precedes it in Luke, though it is also in the mind of the other two evangelists : *οἱ δὲ καταξιωθέντες τοῦ αἰώνος ἐκείνου τυχεῖν καὶ τῆς άναστάσεως τῆς ἐκ νεκρῶν.* Not all the dead, therefore, attain to the resurrection, but only those who are worthy of it, only those who are, as it is further said in the same context, equal to

the angels, and children of God. Accordingly, of the two notions about the resurrection which were current among His people, Jesus decided in favour of the more profound, which declares that only the righteous are raised, as is attested also in Luke xiv. 14 (*ἐν τῇ ἀναστάσει τῶν δικαιῶν*). The resurrection is to Him not a formal concept applicable to all, whether they have cultivated in themselves a higher life or not ; in it the true divine life of a man is brought to the glory for which he is destined ; it is, in a word, the perfection of the personality in God, in which the glorified body can only be thought of as the expression of the perfect inward beauty. That is also formally expressed in the concluding words of Luke, *νιοὶ εἰσιν θεοῦ, τῆς ἀναστάσεως νιοὶ δύντες*, that is, they have attained the end of their eternal destiny just as sons of the resurrection and sons of God, perfect images of the heavenly Father.

## 12. RETROSPECT AND CONCLUSION

Let us look back from the height of this result on what has just been proved with regard to the last day. If Jesus considered the resurrection to be the reward and perfection of the righteous, how impossible is it that He should have fixed a term for that consummation uniform for all, and should have consigned the departed to an intermediate state, which would only have a meaning if it were measured out to each according to his individual need ! Even from this side, therefore, the notion of a last day as an actual terminus the same for all, falls to the ground. The distinction of the *aiών οὐρανός* and *aiών ἐκείνος*, which Jesus has appropriated and applied in His answer to the question of the Sadducees (Luke xx. 34, 35), cannot be adduced against this, for that view is spiritualised in His teaching, and is divested of the character of a purely temporal antithesis. When Jesus speaks in Luke xvi. 8 of the *νιοὶ τοῦ αἰώνος τούτου*, and places over against them the *νιοὶ τοῦ φωτός*, He describes not merely the men of this period of time, but men whose thoughts and aims are merged in the temporal and finite, while the world of eternity shines into this temporal state and makes some to be children of the light. Thus in the present, in which the

kingdom of God is at hand, there lies already the dawn of the *αιών μέλλων*; and especially from the day in which He Himself, as the Risen One, became a partaker of the *αιών μέλλων*, the new and higher order of the world, in which there is no more death or birth, but an immortal life like the angels, has already begun to dawn and overarches the lower earthly world, open at all times for those who have overcome the world, and have become ripe for the world of perfection. This view we may fancy that Jesus held, at least from the time when first He came to look for His own resurrection, not as an awakening at the last day, but within three days. The charm of the old Jewish view was broken up even for His friends by Christ's resurrection, and they had no point to look forward to except their own perfection. This alone gives a reasonable meaning to the obscure intermediate state; and the wide kingdom of the other world, in which are gathered those who have departed from the earth, is also found, when approached from this side, to have the same moral interest as we have already found in our examination of the idea of the final judgment. There we may see an innumerable multitude of human lives rising higher or sinking lower according to the result of their life on earth, as in the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. But over all stands, as the goal of perfection, the heaven of the sons of the resurrection. And this means not only that many whom the closing judgment of their life on earth has carried far down, like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, are able perhaps to raise themselves again and strive to reach that starry heaven, but also that many whom the angels have carried over into a better existence, such as Lazarus, have not yet therewith attained to the eternal house of the Father. The poor Lazarus and the penitent thief have passed into Paradise, but that is not the heaven of the sons of the resurrection of which mention is made in Luke xx. 35 f. The patriarchs and prophets are, according to Matt. viii. 11, Luke xiii. 28, to sit at the festive table of the kingdom of heaven; how much they must have grown in the other world in order to be capable of that, when in this world the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than the greatest prophet! (Matt. xi. 11). These are perhaps strange considerations, in

view of the conceptions of the world beyond, in which we have been trained. But with this conception of ours we have scarcely got beyond the formal notions of Judaism which Jesus found in existence, while the peculiarity of His teaching on this matter lies in this, that He treats these notions as symbols, and, indeed, as insufficient symbols (all symbols are at bottom insufficient), and breaks through them, just as insufficient, with His ideas. If the ideas which we have offered as peculiar to Him cannot be demonstrated fully by way of exegesis, since the form in which they are presented stands in the way, yet they are attested by their harmony with Jesus' fundamental view of the kingdom of God and of the human soul. If the kingdom of God in its perfection is nothing else than the fellowship of the perfected righteous with the eternally good and perfect One, and if the life of the soul inviolably follows the great divine law of moral development, how could Jesus have regarded the relation of man to the kingdom of heaven as closed with that earthly death on which He never lays a special weight? These intimations of a development after death do not exclude the thought of an end, they do not even make it uncertain. As surely as in nature all growth reaches its height and then continues no further, but makes way for another life springing from that which has thus reached maturity, so surely does Jesus expect the moral world some day to reach its maturity. And, indeed, He thinks of a maturity of the two powers of good and evil contending in the moral world, of the wheat and the tares, as it is said in the parable (Matt. xiii. 24-30, 37-43). All those ideas of sin being still pardonable in that world do not lead Him to the speculative conclusion of a universal restoration. He speaks rather of a worm that dieth not. He pronounced over a man the sentence, "It were better for him that he had never been born" (Matt. xxvi. 24). He spoke of the sin against the Holy Ghost which cannot be forgiven. Though we take that first saying as proverbial, and, therefore, not to be dogmatically strained; though we point out in the last utterance that it is only a word of warning which is meant to prevent the sin against the Holy Ghost, but does not suppose it as already committed; yet He always considered it possible for human freedom and sin to

go so far that the power of surrendering to grace might be lost. Whether and how far that will become reality He leaves to the omniscient Father, just as He leaves to Him the sitting on His right hand and on His left (Matt. xx. 23), or the day and hour of the world's judgment. When a hearer on one occasion, touched by the earnestness of His teaching, asked Him, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" He did not answer him with yes or no, but gave the one answer that was of use, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate," for the mere desire does not gain an entrance for us (Luke xiii. 33 f.). On the other hand, He was certain that the eternal Father will perfectly accomplish His purpose of love with the children of men; the completed kingdom of God remains the constant unspoken background of all His predictions. He did not paint with excessive colours; knowing that here He had to do with what "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived" (1 Cor. ii. 9), He represented it quietly in the simplest images. At one time He finds material for His parables in the bright festal room with its hospitable meal, at another time the throne-room in which the king sits judging, surrounded by his friends who share in his government. The ideas of deep satisfaction in loving fellowship with Himself and with one another, and of an exalted kingly activity (Matt. xxv. 21; Luke xix. 17), complement each other. But every attempt to make the unseen conceivable is rendered impossible by the idea that a wholly new world is to be realised; God the Father is rich enough not to need to copy the present world in the next; He has creative power to set up in it something really new and infinitely higher (Matt. xii. 24, 25). Yet as from the seed the harvest proceeds by a true development, the completed kingdom of the Father, in which the righteous will shine as the sun (Matt. xiii. 43; cf. Dan. xii. 3), will be nothing else than the harvest of that kingdom of God which Jesus, as God's sower, has planted here on earth.

## BOOK II

### THE TEACHING OF JESUS ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

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#### CHAPTER I

##### INTRODUCTORY

###### § 1. THE JOHANNINE QUESTION

THE Fourth Gospel presents itself as a second chief source for the teaching of Jesus. Recently, however, many voices have, with great self-assurance, called in question its character as such. The so-called critical school in this matter still follows on the whole the hypothesis of Baur. According to this hypothesis, the Fourth Gospel is not a work of the Apostle John, but a production of the second century, a writing that has no independent historical foundation, nor even a real historical purpose. In the form of a life of Jesus, the theological opinions which are first stated in the prologue are developed; it is, in fact, to use Hase's appropriate expression, the romance of the Logos. If this view of the Fourth Gospel were established, it would not show us the teaching of Jesus, but only a post-apostolic theology. Certain modifications of the critical hypothesis give a different result. The great difficulties, both of the traditional and of the modern critical conception of this remarkable book, have called forth attempts at mediation, in which many are now inclined to trust. The book is recognised to be of Johannine origin; it has underlying it a genuine tradition, which has been edited

in post-apostolic times. But if we recognise that the author had historical information at his disposal, we have still to ask, Which are the genuine words of Jesus; and especially if, as in the latest attempt of that kind, the division between the genuinely Johannine elements and later additions were essentially a division between the discourses and the historical narratives of the Gospel? biblical theology would seem to be justified in making confident use of the first.<sup>1</sup> But all these mediating hypotheses are in themselves so untenable and weak. The definiteness with which, in our Gospel (xix. 35, xxi. 24), the eye-witness is attested as the composer of the book, excludes in every case the assumption of a pious disciple who had afterwards, in a literary way, worked up oral communications of the Apostle John. The enigmas which the discourses of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel present are not less great than those of the historical narratives for him who does not make aversion to miracles his sole principle of criticism; and, at the same time, the completeness of the literary plan and execution, as well as the symmetry of the style and the religious character, render impossible every attempt to establish here diverse primary elements. And so the more recent critical treatment simply results in this alternative, either the Gospel must be conceived and recognised as the work of an eye-witness and personal disciple of Jesus, or, with its genuineness, we must also give up its historical credibility, and regard it as a purely ideal production of the second century.

## § 2. GENUINENESS OF THE GOSPEL

We, for our part, are firmly convinced of the correctness of the first position, though we do not deny the great and manifold difficulties which the Gospel of John puts in the way of the historical consideration of the life of Jesus. But we hold that these may be solved, and that they are little in comparison with the mountain of difficulties, or rather impossibilities, which stand in the way of a thorough acceptance of the hypothesis of "The Logos romance," and before which its advocates are wont to close their eyes. The reasons

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Wendt, *Die Lehre Jesu*, Bd. i. (1886), and my criticism of this book in the *Göttinger Gel. Anzeigen* of the same year, No. 15.

which lead us to hold that the critical hypothesis cannot be carried through can, of course, be indicated here only in the briefest way. (1) The standpoint of the fourth evangelist is not, as it ought to be according to that hypothesis, a faith in mere ideas, but a faith in facts; salvation, in his view, depends upon definite historical facts. The faith of this evangelist was produced by miraculous facts, and its object is not only the facts essential to salvation, but also the most trivial circumstances of the life of Jesus, all of which he regards as ordained by God and predicted in the Old Testament. With such a point of view, it was impossible for him to set about reconstructing the tradition of Jesus at his own will, or to regard the theological ideas as alone essential, and the narrative as a sort of unsubstantial drapery. (2) The fourth evangelist, in spite of any strangeness in form, unmistakably possesses historical knowledge superior to the Synoptists. This superior knowledge appears in the outline he gives of the public life of Jesus, which, though departing from the tradition of the Synoptists, is unconsciously supported by them, and also in the history of His suffering and resurrection. It is shown also in a whole series of small points on which no stress is laid. Features like these cannot possibly be referred to a purpose to support certain views, but can only be understood as coming from the remembrance of an eye-witness. (3) The external evidence for the existence and use of the Gospel have been gradually completed, so that the late date in which Baur would place its origin has to be given up. It has been found necessary to place it near the age of Trajan, into the beginning of which, according to the testimony of Eusebius, the Apostle John lived. And in that period, when Gnosticism was alarming the Church, the recognition of a Gospel deviating so widely from the Synoptics' presentation, and apparently making such advances towards Gnosis, would be inconceivable, unless an undeniable apostolic authority had compelled that recognition. (4) The twenty-first chapter, which presents itself as an appendix added to the completed Gospel in the name of a number of persons (ver. 24), can only be understood from the need of the Christian community to set at rest a scruple attaching to the death of the Apostle John. This scruple, and this method of setting it

at rest, have meaning only immediately after the death of the apostle, not more than fifty years after; and therefore the genuineness of the Gospel is attested in chap. xxi. 24, at the open grave of the apostle, by his nearest friends. (5) The First Epistle of John, which shows the inimitable Johannine style, and can only be the work of the same author as the Gospel, is a monument whose genuineness there is absolutely neither cause nor reason for calling in question. Neither writing bears any name, and can therefore only proceed from an author who was well known to the first circle of readers, without any mention of his name. To manufacture a book to suit a name and not to name the name, is a thing unheard of and absurd. (6) Finally, the Gospel is unaffected by any of the anxieties and questions which moved the Church in the second century. Neither the question of apostolic tradition, nor that of church order, nor that of asceticism, neither the Gnostic nor the Montanist controversy, has any echo in it, and therefore it cannot have been produced amid the conflicts and developments of the second century; and we do not need to dwell on the difficulty of discovering in the second century a Christian thinker, so immensely superior to all his contemporaries, who has yet left no mark of himself in history. These are reasons which the anti-Johannine critics may indeed ignore but cannot invalidate, and which for that reason they do not like to discuss.<sup>1</sup>

### § 3. DIFFICULTY OF THE DISCOURSES OF JESUS

Nevertheless, if we assume the genuineness of the Gospel, the discourses of Jesus which it contains undeniably present great difficulties. It may be asked whether these are really speculative in character, Alexandrian or semi-Gnostic, as has been maintained. But there is no question that between them and the synoptic sayings of Jesus there is an immense difference, and that the synoptic reports make a stronger impression of originality and faithfulness to history. The form of Jesus' teaching in the Synoptics is the short pictorial popular saying, of which the few longer doctrinal and con-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. my monograph on the Johannine question, reprinted from the *Studien und Kritiken*, 1876.

troversial discourses are made up, or the symbolical narrative the parable. In John, such maxims, for the most part, appear only in the longer doctrinal and controversial discourses, which return again and again with a certain mystic monotony to the same enigmatic words, and in their stream images which might have taken form as parables melt away like ripples. Scarcely once do we hear an echo of the old synoptic doctrine of God's kingdom of righteousness. Instead of that we hear the more of the eternal life which is even now to be attained, and of the judgment which is even now being completed. But we hear, above all, of the Son of God to whom is committed the bestowing of life and the dispensing of judgment, and to believe on whom is therefore the most essential work of God. The rich colours of the epic eschatology, the fantastic pictures of the coming again to judge the world, vanish also before the monotonously repeated promise of the Spirit, the Paraclete. All these discourses, whether addressed to the people, to His enemies, or to the disciples, show little of the influences of that age which are everywhere manifest in the Synoptics, the influences of law and prophets, of Pharisaic ordinances and popular expectations. They move rather amongst the mysteries of the Christian faith, whose meaning the hearers had not yet discovered. And therefore misunderstanding is the most usual motive for their prolongation; but that misunderstanding is not generally removed, but increased, and the object of discourse seems not to be the enlightening and winning of opponents so much as the confusing and embittering of them. There can be no doubt that Jesus did not deliver these discourses in this form; the form of them must be attributed to the evangelist. For all that, they may have been constructed from the most genuine material, from real ideas and sayings of Jesus. And several noteworthy indications show that this is the case—quite apart from the general consideration that we can just as little attribute to an apostle a free invention of words of Jesus, as a free invention of a history of Jesus. In the first place, it is perfectly true what de Wette, in balancing the pros and cons of the Johannine question, has declared. "Many of these sayings shine with a more than earthly brilliance"; out of the mystic monotonous stream of discourse there shine out

inimitably strong and sweet words of Jesus which no man of the second century, which no man indeed but one, could have spoken. And, in fact, it is clear that our evangelist has not quite correctly understood many of the words of Jesus which he communicates. He has misread the destroying of the temple (ii. 19–22), the lifting up of the Son of Man (xii. 32, 33), and the like, by interpreting them as he does the Old Testament. Such misunderstanding and misconstruction of the simple original sense is impossible in a writer who is inventing what he records. And, finally, it is by no means proved, as hostile critics affirm, that the discourses of Jesus in the Gospel are nothing but the unfolding of the ideas expressed in the prologue. In these discourses we nowhere meet with the claim, ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ λόγος, and they do not presuppose, as we shall see, such a relation of God and world, or such a self-consciousness in Jesus, as the Logos idea would lead us to expect; for example, they do not assume that God is only present in the world through the Logos (ver. 17), or that the Son of God has original rights of possession over men (cf. xvii. 6 with i. 4, ix. 11). But if the views of these discourses are not derived from the theology of the evangelist, but deviate from it, they must have been received by him from some other source, and at most recast in form. And the motives to such a recasting are not far to seek in the case of an apostle, especially such a one as John.

#### § 4. SUGGESTED SOLUTION

First of all, the whole material of the Gospel, and especially of the discourses, has passed through the mind of a man of very definite individuality, strong and onesided, in order to assume the form in which it is presented to us. This individuality is most clearly expressed in the First Epistle of John, and there is nothing to oppose the ascription of it to John, the son of Zebedee, the youngest of the three intimate friends of Jesus. Here we recognise the peculiarity of the mystic among the apostles; the man, passionate both in his love and his anger, who in his intense spirituality cares only for the things of the inner life, pays little heed to the historical circumstances, and to what is national and temporary in the

teaching of Jesus. The author repeatedly tells us that this disposition was confirmed in him after the resurrection of Jesus by a mental process in which his recollections of Jesus came to have a new meaning (cf. ii. 22, xii. 16). The life of Jesus in its issue had contradicted their original ideas and expectations, and compelled the apostles, according to their mental characteristics, to reconsider their impressions and recollections, and so, under the guidance of the Spirit (John xiv. 26), they attained a new understanding of what they had experienced, and were able to speak of it in a new and spiritual fashion. Little wonder, then, if, in the apostle's long life, the original text, and the meaning of it which the Spirit had taught him, were involuntarily joined so closely that in old age, when he sought to write down what he had seen and heard, objective and subjective could no longer be separated. Besides, in that century much had been learned; the great mission to the Gentiles, and contact with Paul, its champion, had widened the horizon of the primitive apostles. The obduracy of Israel and the fall of Jerusalem completely stripped away any merely Jewish reference from the gospel they had to preach. The hoary apostle found himself in Ephesus, in presence of a second and third generation of Hellenic Christians (the *νεανίσκοι* and *πατέρες* of his Epistle, all of whom he yet calls *τεκνία*). It was natural that when he wished to make over to them the treasures of his reminiscences, he should make Christ speak in the way in which he (John) had come to understand Him, and not as the scribes in those long-vanished days, but as the Christians in his own time could understand Him. Such were the historical conditions in which this wonderful Gospel and its discourses arose, in which the text of Jesus and the exposition of John, the genuine material and the subjective construction, have so grown together that one often does not know whether Jesus is speaking or the evangelist has taken up the word about Him (cf. iii. 16 f., xii. 44 f.); sometimes the evangelist makes Jesus speak of Himself by name and in the third person (xvii. 3), or makes Him speak in the past tense of events which had happened in the days of John, but were still in the future when Jesus lived (cf. iii. 19, iv. 38). But because the whole of the apostle's individuality and experience mirrored the

image of Christ, because all he had and all he was had come to him through his perfect inward surrender to Christ, this Gospel, with all its freedom and subjectivity, still remains the most faithful image and memorial of Jesus which any man could produce. From this conception of the book follows the standard by which we are to estimate John's contribution to the teaching of Jesus. In general, we can only consider it as a most valuable supplement to the synoptic tradition. The aged apostle, who manifestly knew the synoptic Gospels (cf. iii. 34, vi. 70, xi. 2), had no other reason for telling his story than the sense that the person of Jesus had impressed itself on him in a unique way, and that he possessed stores of reminiscences which had not found a place in the synoptic tradition, and which he did not wish to die with him. On the other hand, in his treatment of his own reminiscences, which is far more subjective than in the Synoptists, there is less attempt at verbal accuracy of reproduction, and it is just possible that the evangelist's own ideas, and the theology which was taking shape in his mind,—using the word theology in the wider sense,—exercised an involuntary influence on the reproduction. Consequently, we have always to consider the teaching of Jesus, as given in John, in its relation to what the Synoptics record. Where it positively agrees with these, we have confirmation of the genuineness of what the Synoptics give us. Where it goes beyond these, but moves in the same direction, we may consider it as a credible extension of lines of teaching which in the synoptic tradition have not, perhaps, got justice. If, on the other hand, trains of thought are found which cannot be naturally inserted into the doctrinal scheme of the Synoptics, but would require us to reinterpret that scheme in some artificial sense, we must then trace back these trains of thought, not to Jesus Himself, but to His exponent.

The simplicity which characterises the Johannine world of thought, as compared with the manifoldness of the Synoptists, permits us here to comprehend the whole doctrinal matter under four points of view—

- I. God and the world.
- II. The testimony of Jesus to Himself.
- III. The founding of salvation.
- IV. The setting forth of eternal life.

## CHAPTER II

## GOD AND THE WORLD

## § 1. THE IDEA OF GOD

The relation of God to the world, as conceived in the Johannine discourses of Jesus, has been found to be Hellenic, Philonic, dualistic; but an impartial statement of the real facts of the case will show us that all the views, coming into consideration here, move on the synoptic lines. Even according to John, Jesus knew that He bore a new idea of God, the perfect and saving idea. "Not that any man hath seen the Father," he says (vi. 46), in contrast with the current knowledge of God which is denied to no one, "save He which is of God, He hath seen God." And this is the eternal life which He desires to procure for all, "that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Him whom Thou hast sent" (xvii. 2, 3). This new and saving knowledge of God has here also its simple and great expression in the name Father. "My Father," "your Father," "the Father," occurs in the Synoptics; only "My Father" appears more frequently, and "your Father" expressly only in xx. 17, while the plain "the Father" is the most usual. There is nothing to indicate that the meaning of this name is different from what it is in the Synoptics; and especially any trinitarian significance is absent here also. The Father is not one divine person beside other divine persons, but He is, as is expressly said in vi. 27, v. 44, xvii. 3: ὁ Θεός, ὁ μόνος Θεός, ὁ μόνος ἀληθινὸς Θεός. That this God is also described (iv. 24) as *πνεῦμα*, is not a speculative, but a practical religious utterance, made for the purpose of deducing from His nature the true worship of God. It signifies the elevation of God above all limits of space, and at the same time His relationship with our inner life, in virtue of which He is not bound to outer places of worship, but is to be sought in our own souls. Great and new as is this foundation of the true worship in spirit and in truth, yet the same idea lies at the basis of the synoptic predictions of the νέος ἀχειροποίητος which is to be set up (Mark xiv. 58).

But *πνεῦμα* is *ζωή*, the true life is Spirit, and the Spirit alone true life (vi. 63, τὸ πνεῦμα ἔστιν τὸ ζωοποιοῦν, κ.τ.λ.), and therefore it is evident that God is conceived simply as the source of life. He is the *ζῶν πατήρ* in the highest sense, the living God (vi. 57) whose royal right it is to raise the dead and make alive (v. 21). He alone has originally *ζωὴν* ἐν *έαντρῳ* (v. 26). But in the fact that He does not keep this wealth of life to Himself, but communicates it, and that, in particular, He has made His Son to be a source of the true and eternal life for all (*καὶ τῷ νἱῷ ἔδωκεν ζωὴν ἔχειν ἐν έαντρῷ*), He first shows His true nature, viz. His love, for love is self-communication. The proclamation of the *ἀγάπη θεοῦ*, as His true ethical nature, pervades the whole Gospel. God loved His Son before the world was (xvii. 25); but this eternal love for the Son is the same as that with which He enfolds His disciples (xvii. 23, 26); nay, He has so loved the world as to give up to it His dearest, His only-begotten Son (iii. 16). It is thus that, in John, Jesus explains the synoptic idea of the absolutely good One, the *εἰς ἀγαθός* (Mark x. 18). The declarations of God's character, *ἀληθής, δίκαιος, ἅγιος*, show that the other side of this idea is not wanting; He is the original pattern of all virtue, His eternal love is most holy. Jesus designates the Father (viii. 26) as Him who is true, because His word can be relied on, because He can only speak truth who is ever the same and faithful. He calls Him righteous Father in the intercessory prayer (xvii. 25), in that part of His nature in which the world knows Him not, but He knows Him; that is, certainly not in the sense of mere penal righteousness, but of His whole moral perfection. And He calls upon Him as the Holy One (xvii. 11) where He prays Him to keep the disciples in the evil world, and to sanctify them in His truth; that is, He calls on Him, as one completely separated from the evil that rules in the world, who desires men to be holy, and makes them holy as He is Himself.

## § 2. THE IDEA OF THE WORLD

Jesus conceives the world as the widest object of the eternal love: "God so loved the world" (iii. 16). The world,

in what sense? The Johannine discourses of Jesus use the concept *κόσμος* in a threefold sense. Sometimes *κόσμος* is simply the world of sense—as when mention is made of “the light of this world,” that is, the sun (xi. 9), or of the *καταβολὴ κόσμου*, that is, the creation of the visible world. But this visible world has meaning for Jesus only in so far as it comprehends and bears humanity. The world in the sense of history, the world of men, is to Him the *κόσμος* proper. To this He knows that He was sent, just as He sends His disciples into it (xvii. 18). This *κόσμος*, the aggregate of beings who are capable of believing and receiving life eternal, He knows to be beloved of God. But—and this brings us to the third sense in which He uses the word—the world as a whole knows nothing, and desires to know nothing, of this love, it finds itself estranged from God and at enmity with Him, ruled by a spirit entirely different from that of the eternal truth and love; and in this sense Jesus says that He and His are not of the world (xvii. 14), and speaks of Satan as the prince of this world (xii. 31). The world has not, however, ceased to be the object of the divine love on account of this ungodly condition; on the contrary, in this condition it first becomes the object of the supreme demonstration of love, which aims at saving those who are lost (iii. 16). It is a complete misunderstanding to infer, from the keen emphasising of the actual contrast between God and the world, an original contradiction of the two. It is only the profound contrast of idea and reality which Jesus emphasises. Certainly this idea, even at the beginning, stood high above the reality. The *καταβολὴ κόσμου* only laid the foundation of what was to grow up from earth until it reached the heaven of the idea. We gather that from the distinction of heaven and earth, which is here repeated in different words, but in no different sense from that of the Synoptics. It has been found surprising that in the Fourth Gospel Jesus should not reckon heaven as part of the world, the *κόσμος*,<sup>1</sup> as if that were not His natural way of thinking. He thinks of heaven—just as when in the Synoptics He speaks of treasure in heaven, or of the heavenly origin of John’s baptism—not as another world of sense above the earth, but as the ideal world, with its eternal

<sup>1</sup> So Pfeiderer, *Urchristenthum*, p. 478.

realities, in which alone God has His home, although He is present in the world also. That is specially clear in the passage (vi. 32) where He refuses to ascribe the quality of heavenliness to the manna which, in the Jewish view, had certainly fallen from heaven, and claims that quality solely for the spiritual gifts of God which appeared in Him, and through which eternal life is communicated. There is an eternal *só̄ga θeou*, a gleam and splendour of the eternal light, a divine self-revelation which is intended for the world, and to convey which the world itself was created. It is this glory of God's self-revelation that fills heaven; with it Jesus was invested by God before the world was; in a veiled form He had it on earth, and gave it to His own (xvii. 22), though He first receives it in fulness as the exalted head of a saved humanity (xvii. 5; cf. with vv. 2, 3). And heaven is the kingdom of the eternal glory of God that is displayed without interruption, but which must come down to earth, and realise there the kingdom of heaven. This makes the words of Jesus (i. 51) intelligible: "Henceforth ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." Heaven, where the eternal blessings and the divine revelations are, stands open, and these blessings are imparted wherever the Son of Man is, who has come to bring the kingdom of heaven near,—there is a blessed tide of benefits from earth to heaven, from heaven to earth, wherever He is, and in this the disciples will henceforth share. This, by the way, is the one passage in John's Gospel in which Jesus speaks of the angels, and the absolutely symbolic sense of the representation is manifest. The angels are just "the angels of God," the several rays of His glory shining out; they are not persons, intermediate between Him and a world otherwise God-forsaken. They are not even inhabitants of heaven, in contrast with men dwelling on the earth. Heaven is indeed a Father's house with many mansions (xiv. 2), but the pilgrims who are to find their quarters there are children of men (xvii. 24). The objects of the eternal love lie in the world of men. The children of men are called to find their true home, as children of God, in the world of eternal life, and in communion with God the Father.

### § 3. EVIL

If this is the Johannine Christ's idea of the world, there is no reason for further attributing to Him any other than biblical views as to the first step towards its realisation, viz. the creation of the world. If, indeed, there lay at its basis an Alexandrian, Philonic, or semi-Gnostic view of the world, as has been asserted by critics, then the contrast of good and evil, conceived in some metaphysical sense, would have to be traced back to the contrast of spirit and matter. But this is not the case. In the first place, the *σάρξ*, the sensuous material part of man, is by no means conceived as in itself the principle of evil, because, springing from the eternal *ὑλή*, it is something in itself innocent and created by God. No trace of an ascetic spiritualising can be discovered in our Gospel. Though, according to iii. 6, the *σάρξ* can only, of course, produce *σάρκα*, sensuous life, and though it is on that account of no service for eternal life as compared with the quickening Spirit (vi. 63), yet in Christ the flesh, as the vessel of the *πνεῦμα*, becomes a means of eternal life (vi. 55–58). How could that be the case if in and of itself it were evil? Though it is equivalent only to the sensuous and mortal part of human nature, and even of Christ's nature, yet it was in His flesh that Christ was able to offer Himself a sacrifice for the life of the world (vi. 51). Neither natural evil nor moral evil is traced to its origin in the Johannine discourses of Jesus, which is little like the Gnostic's way. The question of the origin of natural evil is brought before Jesus in connection with the man born blind (ix. 1 f.); but whilst He denies the Jews' opinion that particular evil follows upon particular sin, He refuses to give any answer to the general question as to the origin of evil. Ask not—that is the meaning of His noble answer—whence misery in its manifold forms has come into the world; ask, rather, for what purpose it is there. It is there that the works of God may be made manifest in it, and that its conquest may serve to glorify the eternal love. Moral evil, as we can easily understand, is more searchingly treated, though entirely in a biblical and synoptic way. The name and concept of sin is the general biblical *ἀμαρτία*, which expresses the voluntary

departure from the divine will. A distinction is made, in biblical and synoptic fashion, between sins of ignorance which are not imputed, and conscious wilful sins which remain (before the eyes of God the Judge). "If ye were blind ye would have no sin; but now ye say we see, therefore your sin remains" (iv. 41; cf. xv. 22, 24, xvii. 25). Again,—just as in the synoptic words about the tree and its fruits,—sin is not applied solely to the individual act, but its root is sought in the disposition in the fundamental bias of the heart, "Whosoever committeth sin," it is said (viii. 34), "he is the servant of sin." Whosoever surrenders himself to it cannot, when he pleases, shake himself free from it, but is permanently ruled by it. And all, even the best and most pious, with one exception, bear in some way this yoke, and need not merely reformation, but renewal from the bottom of the heart, ere they can enter into the kingdom of God: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (iii. 3, 5). But the Johannine Christ does not go further than this exhibition of the perverted and corrupt state of man, the moral error which has become a second nature. He does not deduce sin from sensuality, nor from Adam, nor even from the devil. The latter assertion is indeed disputed, and a dualistic and Gnostic element found in the phrase, "a deceiver and murderer from the beginning," who is likewise the "prince of this world." In point of fact, the Johannine discourses of Jesus do contain a declaration about Satan which goes beyond the synoptic utterances, and might be interpreted as an account of the origin of evil. In the controversy with the Jews (chap. viii.), the devil is made the father of his slandering and murderous opponents. It is said of him that "He was a murderer from the beginning, and abideth not in the truth, for there is no truth in him; when he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of it" (viii. 44). This is an unmistakable allusion to the history of the fall in Gen. iii., where the serpent, afterwards interpreted as Satan, deceived the first man, and brought him to death by means of this deception. But that neither confirms the orthodox theory that Satan is a fallen angel,—the οὐχ ἔστηκεν does not say he stood not, but simply he stands not, in the truth,—nor does it favour the

dualistic Gnostic view that he is by nature a false god opposed to the true, an eternal principle of evil. For the ἀνθρωπόκτονος ἀπ' ἀρχῆς can only be referred to the beginning of man's history, not to the beginning of all things, or of the devil himself—he could only be ἀνθρωπόκτονος ever since there were men. Thus, although we had in this passage a deduction of human sin from the devil, the devil's sin itself remains unaccounted for, and therefore the origin of evil is unexplained. But in reality we have not even a derivation of human sin from Satan ; it is not those who have sinned from Adam, but the slandering and murderous opponents of Jesus, who are traced to him as their father. Now as Jesus in no case means to say that His opponents are created by the devil, it is manifest that father here does not mean so much author as prototype (*ψεύστης καὶ ὁ πατὴρ αὐτῶν*), and that the whole saying means only that the spirit of deceit and murderous hatred which rules the world estranged from God is specially powerful in them, and that they are his genuine children. Conceived thus, this saying of Jesus about Satan in John's Gospel sums up His judgment on the actual condition of the world. While God is the eternal spirit of truth and love, truth and love do not rule in the world as it is, but the spirit of deceit and of hatred—he is the prince (ruler) of this world. And the idea of Satan which Jesus here makes use of expresses nothing else than the united power of the evil that dominates the world in its perfect hostility to God. The reason why the same attention is not given here to the side of natural evil as in the Synoptics, where Satan is also the principle of all derangements of mind and body, lies in a peculiarity of John's style. Not only are the demoniacs of the synoptic narrative not mentioned by John, but the sensuous side of sin gives way to the spiritual, pride, deceit, malice, in which the ungodly nature reaches its climax. It scarcely needs to be noted that this view of sin which has its parallel in the Synoptics, in the special keenness of Jesus' opposition to Pharisaism, entirely contradicts its derivation from matter.

#### § 4. THE UNIVERSAL REVELATION OF GOD IN THE WORLD

Notwithstanding the hostility of the world towards God, which receives its most pointed expression when Satan is called the ruler of this world, God is not remote from or a stranger to this world. On this side also the critical dictum that Philonism is the key to our Gospel, and especially that the sayings of Jesus in it have been fabricated from the Logos idea, refutes itself. In Philo, and according to the very root idea of the Logos doctrine, God is present and active within the world simply through the Logos, who in particular has to draw men to God. In the Johannine sayings of Jesus there is nothing to hinder the direct activity of God on the world, and, in particular, the Father Himself draws the souls of men to His Son. "My Father worketh hitherto," cries Jesus (v. 17) to the Jewish rulers when they sought to reprove Him for healing a man on the Sabbath, by adducing the example of God's rest on the Sabbath after the six days' work of creation. God did not merely create the world long ago,—He has never ceased to be creatively active in it,—but He also governs the moral world, notwithstanding the prince of this world. This government appears chiefly in negative fashion as an avenging moral order of the world. He judges no man (v. 22), but He makes evil or unbelief its own judge (iii. 18). Whoever rejects His light and truth, His holy and good self-revelation, and His word that testifies of it, remains in darkness and deception. Whoever will not take from Him the true eternal life, abideth in death, that is, in the opposite of eternal life. He will die in his sins, as it is said in viii. 21, 24, that is, be destroyed in soul and body (cf. Matt. x. 28). But this negative penal government of the world is supplemented by a positive saving one, and this does not begin with Christ, in whom, of course, it is completed, and it was not confined even to the sphere of the old covenant, it extended to the whole world. "It is written in the prophets," says Jesus, vi. 45, "they shall all be taught of God; every man that hath heard and learned (*μαθών*) of the Father cometh to me." He speaks here of men who have still to come to Him, the Saviour, that is, of non-Christians whom also, in x. 16 (other sheep have I who are not of this fold), He expressly

describes as Gentiles. The Father speaks to them and draws them near, as it is said immediately before (vi. 44), without doubt through His revelation in nature and history, through reason and conscience. That applies to all, as it is written, "they shall all be taught of God," though it is not said they shall all hear and learn, take note of and lay to heart. Nor do those who hear and learn attain at once to the perfect and saving knowledge of God, which Jesus has and gives to His own (vi. 46; cf. xiv. 9). But they do come to Him who can show them the Father, and lead them to Him. They are prepared for the perfect revelation of God that appears in Him. Nay, they do their works even now in God, that is, they live and act, so far as they can, in the element of the true and good, and so when the eternal light has appeared in Christ, they come joyfully to this light, that their works may be made manifest that they are wrought in God, that is, that their efforts, directed to the good and true, may here receive their crown (iii. 21). The Johannine Christ thus knows of friends of God in the pre-Christian and non-biblical world, whose inmost bent is towards the eternal light—like the Queen of Sheba, who came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon (Matt. xii. 42). Such men are of the truth (xviii. 37), of God (viii. 47), although they do not know this God in Christ as their Father. These men are not, therefore, exempt from the rule, "except a man be born again," but they will joyfully go through the narrow gate as soon as it is shown to them. Others, indeed, prefer the darkness to the light, because they will not give up their works, which belong to the darkness, and they hate the light when it appears, because it makes manifest their evil works, as the Jewish leaders at the time of Jesus did (iii. 19, 20). It is wonderful what the critical theology has made out of these two classes of men, which the Johannine Christ finds existing in the world and distinguishes. The critical theology has discovered in these two classes the pneumatism and hylics of Gnosticism, instead of rejoicing in the fact that Jesus—in contrast to our traditional Augustinianism, which colours the non-Christian world all black without distinction—sets forth here a clear distinction, which, however we believe in the universal need of salvation, no impartial view can avoid. The

critical theologian will have the friends of God whom Christ recognised to be by birth men of the Spirit, coming to the light and believing in Christ in virtue of a metaphysical necessity ; and they make the reprobates found by Christ to be by birth children of Satan, children of the *σλη* and *σκοτία*, who—as is expressly declared of them (v. 44, viii. 43)—could not by a natural necessity come to Jesus and hear His word. In both of the passages adduced, *οὐ δύνασθε* was not spoken in the sense of a reproach, that is, their impotence was conceived as not excluding the freedom of the will ; v. 44 and also iii. 19, 20 expressly characterise this moral inability as the result of a morally perverted condition of life, and the *οὐ θέλετε ἀλθεῖν πρός με, ἵνα ζωὴν ἔχητε* in v. 40 stands guarding moral freedom. Moreover, the advocates of that forced exposition overlook two things. First, that the synoptic Jesus makes a like distinction among men, only in somewhat different terms. He not only distinguishes good and evil,—and indeed good and evil in relation to the treasure of the heart (Matt. xii. 35),—He also opposes, with regard to their capacity or incapacity for the kingdom of heaven, those who are called blessed and those over whom He has to pronounce a woe ; on the one hand are the merciful, the pure in heart, and those who suffer for righteousness, and on the other are the generation of vipers ; He even says that the knowledge of saving truth given to the disciples, and withheld from the ignorant multitude, is “hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed to babes” (Mark iv. 11; Matt. xi. 25, xiii. 11). The other point that should not have been overlooked is the circumstance that the Johannine Christ in no way excludes from salvation, and the conversion which leads to salvation, even those whom He at present treats as hardened by their own guilt. He tells those same people, to whom He cries (v. 44): “How can ye believe, who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God ?” that He speaks to them in order that they may be saved (v. 34), and repeatedly places over against the obstinate contradiction which He meets with in the world the hope of a great and universal conversion of the world, when He will be lifted up (viii. 28 xii. 31, 32, xvii. 20, 21). Thus, in the Johannine words of Jesus, the wideness of God’s grace and the necessity of a free

choice for its realisation are not less firm than in the Synoptics. "God so loved the world, that every one who believes may have eternal life" (iii. 16; cf. 1 John ii. 2); and "Whosoever is willing to do His will shall know that My doctrine is of God" (vii. 17). But these two things, the universality of grace and the reality of freedom, exclude every distinction of pneumatic and hylic from our Gospel.

#### § 5. ESTIMATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

On the other hand, it would be a real Gnostic mark if the Johannine Christ, whilst recognising a general revelation of God in the pre-Christian period, should pass over or depreciate the particular revelation of the old covenant. This also has been asserted regarding the Johannine sayings of Jesus. Appeal has been made to the expression, "your law," which appears twice (viii. 17, xiii. 34)—an expression which seems to indicate an outside standpoint. The extreme Gnostic rejection of Moses and the prophets has been found in the saying (x. 8): "All who came before Me were thieves and robbers"; nay, some have gone so far as to discover in the Johannine sayings a Demiurgus, the God of the old covenant, but not the Father of Jesus Christ. But in fact the recognition of the Old Testament revelation and Scriptures is manifest in a quite overwhelming way. Though the evangelist, writing for those who were Gentile Christians by birth, thought it needless to repeat in detail Jesus' attitude towards Moses and the prophets in His discussions with His contemporaries, which occupies so much space in the Synoptics, yet in every way he makes us see that Jesus did take up this attitude. The Old Testament is to the Johannine Christ also the Holy Scriptures, which must be fulfilled (xvii. 12), and cannot in any phrase be broken, or declared not binding (x. 35); John and Matthew (v. 17–19) are here at one. In no Gospel does Jesus appeal more frequently and more expressly to the Old Testament Scriptures than in the fourth (for example, iii. 14, vi. 45, vii. 38, xv. 25, xvii. 12). Certainly that dreary study of the letter, without feeling for the living word of God, which was practised by the scribes, as if it could give them eternal life, He rejects in characteristic

words, which our translation unfortunately does not correctly render (v. 39);<sup>1</sup> but in the same breath He certifies that the Holy Scriptures do testify of the Messiah, that in them the Father has beforehand testified of Him (v. 37, 39). And of those to whom the Old Testament revelation was given, He says: Abraham loved the truth, and rejoiced to see the day of the Messiah; and he saw it (in the other world), and was glad (viii. 56). Moses testified of the Messiah, and will accuse the scribes before God because of their unbelief (v. 45, 47). John the Baptist was a burning and shining light, and bore witness to the truth regarding Jesus (v. 33, 35). How is it possible, in presence of this, to apply the words (x. 8): *πάντες, δοσι ήλθον πρὸ ἐμοῦ, κλέπται εἰσὶν καὶ λησταῖ*—whether *πρὸ ἐμοῦ* be genuine or not—to Moses and the prophets? The reference must be to the scribes and Pharisees who in the lifetime of Jesus attempted to catch away from Him His sheep, that is, the men in Israel who had turned towards Him. And even the striking expression, “your law,”—whether it was really used by Jesus, or merely put into His mouth by the evangelist,—stands on both occasions, not in the sense of “your law with which I have nothing to do,” but “your law to which you attach such absolute value, and which is your highest authority.” As in the case of the Synoptics (cf. Matt. xii. 5), He appeals here also (vii. 23) to the law itself against the reproach of breaking the law. In the law is revealed that will of God, which makes him who earnestly desires to do it sensible that Jesus’ teaching is of God (vii. 17). Finally, in the controversy between the Jews and the Samaritans about the right place of worship, Jesus places Himself, so far as the question can be answered historically, on the side of the legitimate tradition: “We know what we worship, you know it not: for salvation is of the Jews” (iv. 22). It may be said that Jesus’ whole estimate of the Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel is mirrored in this remarkable passage. Above all,

<sup>1</sup> It is manifest to every reasonable expositor that *ἴσπευστε* here is indicative and not imperative, as Luther has translated; for how could any one base a summons to Bible reading in the words: “In them ye think ye have eternal life.” But our Church tradition never gives up a mistranslation which has got its place in the store of familiar texts.

He here expressly acknowledges that He worships the same God as His people do in Jerusalem; and the same is implied in the story of His cleansing the temple (ii. 16), where He calls it "My Father's house." That destroys all critical fancies of a Demiurge in the Fourth Gospel to be distinguished from God the Father, as the God of the Jews. Then He acknowledges that His people were chosen first for salvation by God: "We know what we worship: salvation is of the Jews." That universal revelation of God which even the heathen receive leaves Him still an unknown God. And God desires to be known by man, and to be worshipped with clear understanding (iv. 23), and that was made possible to the Jews in a higher degree. Then that universal revelation made salvation possible for individuals, but not for the world; that required a process in history, which is found in Jewish history—*ἡ σωτηρία ἐκ τῶν Ιουδαίων ἐστίν*. But these words mark also the limitations of Judaism which the synoptic Christ indicates in the words: "The law and the prophets prophesied until John, but from the days of John the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence." In the God whom they worshipped in the temple at Jerusalem, the Jews did not see the Father; he only has seen the Father who is of Him (vi. 46). And therefore, even in the case of the Jews, the worship of the Father in spirit and in truth was not yet possible, although the Father seeks for it as the only worship which sanctifies and makes blessed. In a word, salvation comes historically from the Jewish nation, but the Jewish nation did not produce it; it is only the earthly cradle in which salvation is laid by heaven. It must be begotten of God, and brought into the world in Him.

## CHAPTER III

### THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS TO HIMSELF

#### § 1. THE PROBLEM

At this point we arrive at that which is by far the most important to our evangelist, the self-consciousness of Jesus,

and the words in which He expressed that consciousness. If, in the Synoptics, this stands more in the background, behind the preaching of the kingdom of heaven, John rather brings it into the foreground of his Gospel, in order to make all else fall into the background. But not only is the testimony of Jesus to Himself far more frequent in John than in the Synoptics, it is also far more sublime, as it rises to declarations of a former heavenly life, and so there arises for us here one of the most important problems of New Testament theology, which at the same time on the side of biblical theology is really the kernel of the so-called Johannine question. The question is whether what Jesus says of Himself in John is or is not in harmony with what is found in the Synoptics; is the self-consciousness of Jesus as John reports it, in spite of all the loftier heights which he discloses, not fundamentally a true human consciousness as the Synoptics represent? or does it move on a quite different level, and is it at bottom the consciousness of the personal Logos, that is, of a divine person who only afterwards descended and took upon Himself a human form? The latter is the common conception both of the orthodox and critical theology; but the orthodox theology starts here in its attempt to establish on scriptural grounds the old Church Christology, or the modern kenotic transformation of it, whilst the critical theology finds in the anti-synoptic and docetic Christology of the Fourth Gospel the most convincing proof of its unhistorical character, which at the same time would cut the ground from below the whole orthodox theory. Let us examine, first, the parts of Jesus' testimony to Himself in John which are paralleled in the Synoptics, and then the facts which go further.

### § 2. JESUS THE MESSENGER OF GOD

To begin with, Jesus appears in the Fourth Gospel quite in the same relation to the Messiah idea as in the Synoptics. He knows that He is the Messiah, but He suppresses this name. When His first disciples, who had been directed to Him by John the Baptist, greet Him as the Promised One, and exclaim one to another, "We have found the Messiah of whom Moses and the prophets have written" (i. 41, 45), He

calmly accepts the designation. But subsequently He refers to it so little that a long time later the confession of Peter, "Thou art the Holy One of God" (that is, just the Messiah, vi. 69; cf. Matt. xvi. 16), appears as a special act of faith. Only once, among foreigners, at Jacob's well in Samaria, where the situation of the moment compelled the confession, does Jesus avow the name Messiah (iv. 25, 26). Only a few months before His death the Jews in Jerusalem press Him and say: "How long makest Thou us to doubt? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly" (x. 24); and even then His answer does not satisfy them. We have learned above, in our examination of the Synoptics, the reason of this reserve. It is not that the name Messiah, by which the Israelites certainly understood simply a man specially favoured and anointed by God (Ps. ii. 2; cf. John i. 45), would not have been sufficiently exalted; for He gladly accepted it from His most familiar friends (cf. besides vi. 69, ix. 22, xi. 27). Instead of the name that was encompassed with political passion, and liable to be misunderstood, He prefers the more indefinite and simple "Sent of God," that is but faintly echoed in the Synoptics, perhaps in the repeated and significant *ἡλθον* (Matt. v. 17, x. 34), or in *ὁ ἀπόστειλας με* (Mark x. 40). In John, Jesus prefers to speak of the Father who sent Him (*ὁ πέμψας* or *πέμψας πατήρ*, v. 37, vii. 16, 28, viii. 16, 18, etc.), and designates Himself with a certain solemnity as *δν ἀπέστειλεν* *ὁ πατὴρ, ὁ θεός* (v. 38, vi. 29, vii. 29, x. 36, xvii. 3). In doing so He seems to place Himself in the series of prophets (cf. i. 6), and He can in point of fact apply to Himself a proverb that holds good of a prophet (iv. 44), or include Himself with the last of the prophets, the Baptist, as witness of a divine revelation (iii. 11, *μαρτυρίαν ἡμῶν*). But He immediately distinguishes Himself again from the Baptist, who could only speak *ἐπίγεια*, whilst He alone can proclaim *τὰ ἐπουρανία* (iii. 12), corresponding to the synoptic *μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας*. It is simply the character of one sent of God, the perfect revealer of God, that He claims for Himself. But that it is a man who is sent by God, and not God the Son coming into the world, is quite plain from the solemn passage xvii. 3: *σὲ τὸν μονὸν ἀληθινὸν θεόν, καὶ δν ἀπέστειλας Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν*, though some have tried to extract the latter meaning from

the use of the word Father as sending Him. He who places Himself beside the only true God, as God's messenger, marks Himself out, according to every law of logic and language, as a being who is not God but man.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, it follows from this idea of the Sent of God, the perfect instrument of the revelation of God to the world, that this man can lack nothing of what is required for the setting up of the perfect knowledge of God and communion with God in the world. This Messenger of God can call Himself the "Light of the world" (viii. 12), as the servant of Jehovah in Isaiah had already been called "the light of the Gentiles," just because He is the bearer of the divine revelation that gives light to the world. He can call Himself the Way, the Truth, and the Life (xiv. 6, xi. 25); for He forms the bridge, and the only bridge, by which men may come into communion with the heavenly Father: He is the historical fountain of life out of which all may draw eternal truth and eternal life. He can say, "He that hath seen Me (viz. with the eyes of the spirit) hath seen the Father" (xiv. 9); for in Him the eternal Father has indeed made Himself perfectly known to the world, and translated, as it were, His secret divine nature into the human. And in the strength of all this He can demand "that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father" (v. 23).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Weiss, who wrongly applies to Jesus the *οὐτος ἡστιν ὁ αἰλαγθεῖνος θεὸς* (in 1 John v. 22), finds it quite intelligible that one who is Himself *αἰλαγθεῖνος θεός* should yet call the Father *τὸν μονὸν αἰλαγθεῖνον θεόν*. I confess that I would find it absolutely unintelligible. For we should have to assume, by help of the kenotic theory, that Jesus even in His intercessory prayer did not know that He was not a man but was God. But of what value would His whole testimony to Himself be if He did not know this?

<sup>2</sup> That leaves the most decided subordination to the Father. "The Father," says Jesus (xiv. 28), "is greater than I"; and this saying, which in the context is meant to express that it is for Him an elevation of life to go to the Father, is as little offensive on human lips as the saying of the First Epistle of John (iii. 20), that "God is greater than our heart." If, in spite of this, Weiss maintains against me, with regard to the passage v. 23, that it speaks not only of being honoured along with God, but of being honoured as highly as God, I do not know how he can appeal to the context in favour of this. The connection shows that Jesus claimed that honour simply in His character as the Sent of God. An ambassador may demand that he be honoured for the sake of the king who sends him, and say that to dishonour him means dishonouring his king. But no reason-

All these declarations, which are so often adduced in favour of a superhuman glory possessed by Christ, do not carry us beyond the ideal conception of human nature, though they certainly do transcend all our experience of mankind. They find place in that Son of Man who alone realises the idea of humanity, in whom is disclosed the fulness of the eternal love, and who is the perfect image of God among men. But these declarations do not even go beyond what the Synoptics report of the consciousness of Jesus and His testimony to Himself. They are all comprehended in the one synoptic saying (Matt. xi. 27): "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him."

### § 3. THE SON OF MAN AND SON OF GOD

But even the two synoptic designations of Jesus as the "Son of Man" and "Son of God" are found again in John, and manifestly in the same sense as there. The former notable name appears twelve times,—for ix. 35 should also be read *τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*,—and with the exception of xii. 34 only in the mouth of Jesus Himself. The question of the people (xii. 34), "*τίς ἐστιν οὗτος ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου?*" shows that the name was not a designation of Messiah familiar among the Jewish people. They manifestly came to know the expression first as a possible designation of Messiah from the lips of Jesus. That as used by Jesus, however, it rests on Dan. vii. 13, and is meant to designate the bearer of the kingdom of heaven, is confirmed by all the other passages, and especially by the close relation in which the "Son of Man" is placed to heaven. As in Dan. vii. 13 He appears "in the clouds of heaven," so in John i. 51 the heaven opens above Him that the angels of God may ascend and descend upon Him. According to iii. 13, He has come down from heaven and is (constantly and inwardly) in heaven. According to iii. 14, viii. 28, xii. 34, He must be lifted up, and able ambassador demands to be honoured just as highly as his king. Such a demand would also be entirely opposed to the humility of the Johannine Christ, who calls the Father His God (xx. 17).

lifted up (vi. 62) to where He was before, that is, to heaven. In vi. 27 He offers the heavenly bread of life; in vi. 53 He makes His flesh and blood the food and drink of eternal life; in ix. 35 He is the object of faith; and in xii. 23, xiii. 31, He must be glorified through suffering and death,—all of which agree with what the Synoptics report of the fundamental significance of the God-sent Bearer of salvation. The one notable distinction is, that in iii. 13, vi. 62, the Son of Man is thought of as pre-existent, existing in heaven before His life on earth. We shall return to this point in its proper place. Peculiar is the passage, v. 27: God has given His Son power, *καὶ κριτὸν ποιεῖν, δὲ τὸν υἱὸν ἀνθρώπουν ἔστιν.* Some have entirely rejected this passage from the examples of the name Son of Man, and wished to take the *υἱὸν ἀνθρώπουν* as equal simply to *ἀνθρωπός*, because it lacks the double article of the others. But this lack of the article is explained by the fact that the expression stands here only as predicate, and it is not elsewhere John's manner to put the poetic *υἱὸς ἀνθρώπουν* instead of the simple *ἀνθρωπός*. God has given His Son authority to administer judgment because He is a man, would not by any means be so evident as: He hath done so because He is the man from heaven, who forms the divine standard for the worth or worthlessness of all other men, and has subjected all to His righteous judgment through the offer of the kingdom of heaven. If the passage be so understood, like Mark ii. 27, 28, it lays stress on the fact that the Son of Man does belong to humanity. But even if we explain v. 27 differently, the human and not divine personality of the *υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπουν* lies in the ineffaceable significance of the expression itself. But the designation of Jesus for Himself, which is oftenest repeated in John, is that which but seldom meets us in the Synoptics, the name "Son of God." Sometimes it is fully expressed; sometimes it appears in the significant abbreviation, the Son; and sometimes it is implied in the uncommonly frequent, "My Father," with reference to God, which has chiefly helped to bring the later theological idea, "God the Son," into our Gospel. We have here also to distinguish in John the sense in which the name is used by Jesus Himself, and that in which it is applied to Him by others. On the lips of others it is simply the name of honour, springing from Ps. ii. 7, which is given to

Messiah conceived throughout as a man, in order to describe Him as the special favourite and chosen of God. In this sense the Baptist (i. 34) describes Jesus to his disciples as the Son of God, because he had seen the Messianic anointing of this child of man. Nathanael, overawed, to whom Jesus has just been proclaimed as the Messiah, but also described as Joseph's son from Nazareth, cries to Him, i. 49 : "Thou art the Son of God ; Thou art the King of Israel,"—the two names of homage explain each other in the popular Messianic sense. In like manner, Martha (xi. 27) makes her confession of faith to the effect that He is the Messiah, "the Son of God, who should come into the world" ; and in ver. 22 she conceives Him as a man who is so much the beloved of God as to obtain from Him whatever He may ask. Jesus could not possibly have accepted the name in this human sense from His friends and applied it to Himself in a wholly different sense, uniting with it a metaphysical suggestion of divinity. Certainly even in John, as in the Synoptics, He expresses by the name Son, not so much His Messianic dignity as the personal relation to God which lay at the basis of that dignity, and which both entitled and bound Him to call God His Father in a special unique sense. And this personal usage of His is so strange to the hostile Jews, and in its familiarity with God it strikes them at times as so extravagant, that they repeatedly find it blasphemous, and connect with it the reproach that Jesus makes Himself a God, or equal to God (v. 18, x. 33). But to make this idea of the Jews an argument for the orthodox or critical conception of the name Son is indeed very strange ; as if the Jews in the Fourth Gospel did not regularly misunderstand Jesus, and as if Jesus in both cases did not expressly repel the reproach of making Himself equal with God. When Jesus says of Himself as the Son of God, that the Father has sent or given Him to the world (iii. 16, 17), has intrusted Him with this or that great office or work (v. 22, 26); that the Father loves Him, and shows Him all things ; that He leaves Him not alone, but will glorify Him (v. 20, viii. 29, xvii. 1 f.),—all that does not go beyond the idea of the favourite and chosen among the children of men whom God has intrusted with His highest mission—the less so that it is expressly based on the human moral obedience of

the Son (viii. 29, x. 17). And the addition of *μονογενής* to *νιός*, which the evangelist, plainly using words of his own (i. 18), puts on several occasions in the mouth of Jesus (iii. 16, 18), changes nothing in the only interpretation of the concept Son which is true to Scripture. The word which the evangelist (i. 14) uses apparently of the Logos as such, but really of the historical Christ, who already in ver. 6 is spoken of under the names *λόγος* and *φῶς*, merely denotes that He was an only child (cf. Luke vii. 12), and has nothing to do with the manner of His origin, or even with the idea of an eternal generation; it simply expresses the uniqueness of the relation of Sonship in which Jesus stands to God. We have already remarked above, that the concepts God and Father, even in the Fourth Gospel, are entirely coincident, and that therefore there can be no mention in that Gospel of a "God the Son," in the sense of the later ecclesiastical doctrine of the Trinity; but that, according to all the laws of speech, the Son of God must be conceived as a being different from God, that is, human. But we have still to consider two express proofs for this christological mode of thought of our Gospel. The first is in the eighth chapter, where Jesus contrasts Himself as Son with the Jews as servants. But the Jews, according to ver. 34, are servants not because they are men, but because they are sinners. It follows therefore that Son—a concept which first makes its appearance quite specifically in ver. 35 as a universal human ideal—is that man who is in unbroken communion with God. There is only one who is really in such communion, and He alone can procure for the servants the rights of children. And in agreement with this, in what immediately follows the relation of Sonship is determined according to Christ's idea as moral likeness, just as the divine Sonship is in Matt. v. 45. The Jews are no children of Abraham, because they do not the works of Abraham. They are not the children of God but of the devil, because lying and murder is their nature. This makes plain the sense in which Jesus claims God as His Father, in contrast with them. Still more remarkable is the other passage, x. 33–38. As it is the only passage in the Fourth Gospel in which the divine Sonship of Jesus is formally discussed, it is quite decisive as to its meaning. The Jews have interpreted His words, "I

and the Father are one," as though He thereby wished to make Himself a God—*ἀνθρωπος δν ποιεις σεαυτον θεον*; but Jesus decidedly rejects this interpretation. He does not answer the reproach that He being a man makes Himself a God, as He ought to have done according to the orthodox and critical understanding, "I do not make Myself so, but am so." But He appeals to the fact that the Scriptures, which cannot be broken, call those gods to whom a word of God, that is, a divine communication, making them magistrates or judges, came. How then can He be reproached with blasphemy who has received from God a mission so much higher, because He claims (the lesser) name Son of God? That is a defence which would be meaningless and even false, if to Him the Son of God were not a human being in the same sense as those "gods." Finally, we are led to the same result by the expression which Jesus here uses concerning His mission, on which rests His right to call Himself the Son of God: *δν ο πατηρ ἡγιασεν*. Apply that as we may to His anointing at the baptism before entering on His public ministry, or to the election before His birth (the following, *καλ ἀπέστελεν εις τὸν κόσμον*, in xvii. 18, allows both), it always designates an act of God such as can only affect a man. For the personal Logos, or God the Son, could neither be anointed with the Holy Spirit, which He in and of Himself would have, nor be chosen, that is, selected, because there would be no others His equals from whom He could be chosen.

#### § 4. PURELY HUMAN FORM OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

But the Johannine testimony goes hand in hand with the synoptic, not only in the direct declarations about Himself, such as are contained in the great names, Son of Man and Son of God, but also in the whole description of the consciousness, which is perhaps gathered in a more impressive and convincing manner from indirect expressions. If we were able in a host of expressions and features in the synoptic Gospels to find proof that Christ's consciousness was at bottom human, and that every higher element rests simply on that human foundation, we could do so much more fully from the Gospel of John; the confession of a true human dependence

on His God and Father sounds through the entire Gospel. In chap. vii. 40, Jesus frankly calls Himself "a man" who tells His people the truth which He has heard of God. According to His own definite declarations, everything He has, speaks, or does, is given Him by His Father, the one God: the men whom He wins as His own (vi. 37, 39, 44, 65, x. 29, xvii. 6); the works and miracles which He performs in His Father's name (x. 25), and which properly the Father Himself dwelling in Him does (v. 36, xiv. 10); the doctrine which He proclaims and the words which He communicates to His own (vii. 16–18, viii. 28, xiv. 24, xvii. 8); nay, eternal life itself, is given to Him that He may have it to give to men (v. 26, vi. 57).<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, He does nothing of His own impulse, has not even come of His own impulse, but has been sent and commanded by the Father (v. 43, vii. 28, viii. 28, viii. 42, x. 36); He can do nothing of Himself, according to His own express declarations (v. 19, 30), but only what the Father shows and directs Him to do. As a child observes his father, so He observes God and what He does, in order to know what the Son has to do (v. 19). It is most violent and unnatural to apply such words to the Logos or "eternal Son," and to His dependence on God the Father through an eternal generation. The Gospel nowhere speaks of such an eternal generation, and the subject of all these declarations is not the pre-existent Logos or eternal Son, but the man Jesus as He sojourned among men (cf. especially v. 27). If the Logos or eternal Son were indeed the summary of all God's thoughts, the joint-Author of all God's decrees, and the joint-Creator of men, then how could He say that His words and works were taught and given Him; that the men belonging to Him on earth are given to Him by God; that He did not Himself conceive the purpose of His coming into the world?<sup>2</sup> Could

<sup>1</sup> A passage in which it may be asked whether the *ζω διὰ τὸν πατέρα* and *ζῆσσε δι' ἑμῶν* are not meant in the sense of *διά cum genitivo*.

<sup>2</sup> Pfleiderer, *Urchristenthum*, vii. 54, sees quite correctly that instead of the metaphysical relation between God and the Logos, we have in John an essentially ethical relation between Father and Son. But he does not see that with this the Christ of John ceases to bear the character of the Logos of Philo, at least in His own sayings. If in the Johannine Son of God "the metaphysical mediatorialship is limited to His creative activity," of which confesseedly there is no mention whatever in the Johannine

the Logos, or God the Son, in that case express Himself with truthfulness when He says, vii. 16 : "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me"; "whether my doctrine is of God, or whether I speak of Myself"? Can anyone speak of himself more humanly than Jesus has done in vii. 18 : "He who speaketh of himself (from his own inspiration) seeketh his own honour; but he who seeketh the honour of him that sent him is true, and no unrighteousness is in him"? But the Johannine Christ attests, if possible, still more clearly His true human relation to God the Father. While a personal Logos must have been simply one in will with the Father from eternity, He distinguishes His true human will from the will of the Father, and declares (quite as in the Gethsemane prayer in the Synoptics) that He doeth not His own will in order that He may do the will of the Father (v. 30, vi. 38). He has received commandments from His Father in the fulfilling of which He sees for Himself the way of eternal life (xii. 49, 50). He has to fulfil these commandments as His disciples have to fulfil His commandments (x. 18, xiv. 31, xv. 10), and in His obedience He can hesitate, waver, and apparently not know for what He is to pray (xii. 27). This brings us to the most decisive proof of His humanity, His prayerful relation to God. The Johannine Christ prays to the Father like the synoptic Christ (xi. 41 f., xvii. 1 f.). He worships Him in common with His people (iv. 22 : *ημεῖς προσκυνοῦμεν*; cf. Matt. xi. 25); nay, He will still have to pray to Him in His future glory (xiv. 16), and even as the Risen One He calls Him, joining with the disciples, My God and your God (xx. 17). These facts destroy even the most daring Kenotic theory with its seeming explanation. For if in His intercessory prayer, in which He recalls the glory He had with the Father before the world was, if even after the resurrection, when He had again entered on possession of this glory, He did not yet fully know His eternal relation to the Father,—a relation in virtue of which He should be worshipped,

sayings of Jesus, does not the Philonic element in these sayings become that Lichtenberg knife without blade, and which lacks the handle. Only by force and against the connection has Pfeiderer imported into the passage (v. 26) a creative activity of the Son, beside His redeeming activity.

but could not Himself worship,—how should the Kenotic dogmatist know about this relation? Does he know the Son of God better than He knew Himself?

*How the sayings  
of St. John might  
clear up!*

*Does this take us directly into consideration?*

### § 5. SINLESSNESS AND ONENESS WITH GOD

Now the divine glory of Jesus, even in the Johannine account, rests on that true human relation to God as its foundation. That glory is represented chiefly as a moral uniqueness, as an absolute obedience of the child to the Father, in a word, as sinlessness. It is worthy of note that in the Johannine sayings the sinlessness of Jesus is attested far more frequently and expressly than in the Synoptics. That is also a proof of His true human nature, because, in the case of a divine person, sinlessness would be a self-evident, because a metaphysical quality. But for that very reason it would be superfluous and meaningless to emphasise it. But it is described also in the most human style as unselfishness and absolute surrender to the will and service of the Father. The Johannine Christ, as He declares Himself to be utterly dependent on the Father, has no wish whatever to be anything else than the Father's passive instrument. He declares that He does not do His own will, but that of the Father (v. 30, vi. 38); He does not express judgments of His own, but such as God inspires (v. 30); He seeketh not His own honour, but the honour of the Father (vii. 18, viii. 50); and, therefore, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him (vii. 18). He can say: "I know Him, and keep His word" (viii. 55); "I abide in His love" (xv. 10); "I do always what is pleasing to Him" (viii. 29); "My meat—My daily satisfaction—is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work" (iv. 34). In this consciousness He can ask His contemporaries: "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" (viii. 46). When His earthly life is near its end He can comprehend its collective moral deeds in the great words: "I have overcome the world" (xvi. 33). He can prophesy in view of the last moral test: "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me" (no part in Me, nothing by which he can lay hold of Me), xiv. 30. That perfect oneness with God, which certainly gives us the right

to speak of a divinity of Christ, is based by Himself on this moral uniqueness and faultlessness as a man, and not on any metaphysical, trinitarian community of nature with God. In viii. 16 He says: "If I judge, My judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and He who sent Me." That is to say, He alone would be a weak, fallible man; but the Father, who sent Him, is with Him, and does not allow Him to fail in a single word. In viii. 29 He says: "He who sent Me is with Me: He does not leave me alone because I do always what is pleasing in His sight." Thus in the simplest and most intelligible way—but dogmatic prejudice often makes the simplest the hardest for us to understand—He rests His communion with God on what is ethical. But "with Me" is a less perfect expression for this communion, the more perfect and also more frequent expression is "in Me," or the reciprocal in one another. "The Father, who dwelleth in Me," it is said (xiv. 10), with the added word of description, "the Father in Me and I in the Father" (x. 38); "I in the Father, and the Father in Me" (xiv. 11); "Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee" (xvii. 21). And from this follows in the same intercessory prayer (xvii. 10) the jubilant: "All Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine" (cf. Matt. xi. 27). From this follows the great saying already quoted (x. 30): "I and the Father are one (*ἐν ἕστεν*). "I and the Father are one" does not mean: we form together with the Holy Spirit a triune God; but, as the context undeniably proves, we are so completely of one heart and one soul, that what is in My hand is at the same time in My Almighty Father's hand, from which no man can pluck it. No Christology can be simpler or more transparent than this of the Johannine sayings of Jesus. Christ's was a human heart, distinguished from all others by the fact that it cherished nothing ungodly, nothing that separated it from God; He was related to God in pure humility, childlikeness, and obedient love, and in Him, for that very reason, the eternal holy God was able to make His dwelling-place as in no other,—in Him God dwelt, full of grace and truth (i. 14); and so in this human heart God's perfect revelation, His true incarnation, has now taken place: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." We asked before, in considering the Synoptics, what need of faith does

this Christology leave unsatisfied? what is wanting in the Christ so understood in order to His being the perfect Mediator between God and man? But if people continue to protest so excitedly that a man would not say such things of himself as, "I and the Father are one: he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," the offence springs solely from the confusion of the ordinary concept man as known in experience, with the biblical idea of man which posits the image of God as the ideal of humanity, and therefore exhibits the true God-man in the man who is the real ideal, and who realises the idea in perfect communion with God.

#### § 6. THE IDEA OF PRE-EXISTENCE

But this simple, sufficient, and purely religious Christology of the Johannine discourses seems to be crowned by another speculative Christology, to which the orthodox dogmatic, as well as the modern critical, standpoint can appeal. It is a fact that the Johannine Christ claims for Himself a previous heavenly life; and from this pre-existence an entirely different Christology obtrudes itself, which unquestionably transcends the measure of the human anthropocentric Christology which we have hitherto found. Though that were so, as both wings of our present theology agree in accepting, it would not in anyway do away with what we have already proved. That cannot be got rid of by ingenious interpretations. The fact would even then remain that the whole synoptic testimony and the greater part of the Johannine know nothing of a pre-existence, and agree in presenting only the Christology hitherto unfolded; and this would, according to all principles of historical criticism, settle the historical question about the self-consciousness of Jesus, so far as it could be answered from the Gospels. Whatever in the Fourth Gospel does not agree with the common assumptions of the Synoptics and John, must unquestionably be attributed to the fourth evangelist. As in his preface he offers the Logos idea as the key to the understanding of the person of Christ, it might easily be supposed that this idea affected his recollection of some sayings of Jesus, and that he read into them beginnings of speculation, just as he had done even with obscure words of

the Baptist (i. 15, 30). However, before we decide on such an assumption, we may ask whether the apparent discordance in the Johannine discourses of Jesus really exists, or whether—which must be regarded from the first as the more probable—what in John's report seems to go beyond the Synoptics' report of Jesus' testimony to Himself cannot be harmonised with what has been already set forth.

#### § 7. HISTORICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLANATION OF IT

We begin with the immediate and express declarations of pre-existence. There are four of them, all belonging to the very agitated moments of the closing days of our Lord's life. In the after discussions on the great mystic discourse on the bread of life, and the eating and drinking of His flesh and blood, Jesus (vi. 62) cries to His hearers, who are offended: "Does this offend you? what and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?" At the close of the very excited controversy about the children of Abraham (viii. 58), the Jews, misunderstanding the words, "Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it," scornfully cry to Him, "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham?" and Jesus majestically answers: "Before Abraham was, I am." The other two declarations belong to the intercessory prayer, xvii. 4, 5: "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory I had with Thee before the world was." And ver. 24: "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." Principally on these passages, taken in connection with the prologue of the Gospel, and with other traits of the Johannine discourses to which we shall yet come, is based the conception that Jesus, according to John, knows Himself to be the personal Logos or eternal Son of God, who, before He came incarnate into the world, lived in heavenly glory with the Father, and brought into the world with Him the memory of that pretemporal and superhuman existence. But is not that to use the trinitarian notions of the fourth and fifth

centuries, which are certainly unknown to the New Testament age and writings, as a key to the mysterious elements of the discourses of Jesus? Another key to these should lie still nearer. In the circles to which Jesus historically belonged, pre-existence was by no means a quite new idea, or one having to do only with the Logos. Everything holy and divine that appeared on earth, or was expected, was traced back to a heavenly original in which it pre-existed before its earthly appearance. Thus the tabernacle (Heb. viii. 5), the city of Jerusalem (Gal. iv. 26; Rev. xxi. 10), the kingdom of God of which Jesus expressly says (Matt. xv. 34) that it was prepared for the pious from the beginning of the world,—how much more then its personal bearer the Messiah. This presented itself, not merely to the biblical writers, but also to Jesus Himself as a form in which to conceive what was a great idea, the idea of the appearance of an eternal Being in time. If Jesus knew the kingdom of heaven to be the Alpha and Omega of the thoughts of God (cf. Matt. xxv. 34), and Himself to be its personal bearer; if, accordingly, He comprehended its appearance as a fact in time, as the appearance of an Eternal—nay, of the Eternal—in time, how could He clothe this consciousness in any other form than that of being before Abraham was? He was sprung from that heaven from which all good and perfect gifts came down to earth; He was with the Father before the world was. Although, therefore, the idea of the pre-existence of the Messiah was one of the favourite thoughts of the fourth evangelist, as is shown by the introduction to his Gospel as well as His First Epistle, yet it is not to be doubted that Jesus Himself, by some expressions which pointed in that direction, gave him ground for that view. Especially in the tense final period of His life, in excited moments and conflicts such as are presented in chaps. vi and viii., and, above all, in the frame of mind of the intercessory prayer, where He is raised above the world and time, it appears quite credible that such a consciousness of eternal existence should at times flash up in Him like a mental vision. There His understanding of Himself for a moment reached its height, but that was by no means the starting-point or permanent background of His thoughts about Himself. For if that had been the case then—and the fact

cannot be too carefully noted—His whole testimony to Himself must have taken another plan and character, and the complete silence of the synoptic and early apostolic tradition regarding those fundamental facts of consciousness would be inconceivable. The objection which has been commonly advanced against this historical and psychological explanation of His words about pre-existence is, that it leads only to an ideal pre-existence in the decree of God, while the relevant passages bear upon the real existence of a personality distinct from God. This objection appears to us very unimportant; not only because it rests upon the literal accuracy of John's reports of the words of Jesus, which cannot be maintained, but still more because it imparts a modern distinction, which is foreign to the concrete biblical thought, into the exposition of biblical words. The heavenly originals of what appeared on earth were realities to the Scripture writers, just as Plato's ideas were to him. The originals in heaven are more and not less real than the phenomena of earth. For all that, it is evident that this existence in God is an existence different from that in the world, that it remains in comparison with the historical realisation a sort of ideal existence. It will not be difficult to apply this scheme of interpretation to all the four utterances of Jesus about His pre-existence, and to show that in each of them the pre-existence is simply the concrete form given to an ideal conception.

### § 8. THE SEVERAL UTTERANCES CONCERNING PRE-EXISTENCE

The first of those four passages is very instructive (vi. 62): *ἐὰν οὖν θεωρήστε τὸν νιὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀνυβαίνοντα, ὃπου ἦν τὸ πρότερον.* No impartial reader will escape the impression that Jesus here conceives Himself as pre-existent just as the Son of Man, for the object of the first proposition is the subject of the second. One may indeed twist and interpret the passage ingeniously in order to harmonise it with the traditional conception: "When you shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before"—not, however, as the Son of Man, but as second person of the Trinity.<sup>1</sup> But when we remember that the words are clearly related to Dan.

<sup>1</sup> Thus still Weiss, *N. T. Theol.* p. 604; vol. ii. p. 335, Eng. trans.

vii. 13, where the Son of Man as such appears in the clouds of heaven before He descends to earth invested with power and glory, that the original passage therefore directly suggested the notion of a heavenly pre-existence of the Son of Man, we will, unless dominated by an invincible dogmatic prejudice, recognise the worthlessness of that subterfuge. Add to this (1) that the Jewish Book of Enoch, or one of its Jewish Christian portions, conceives the Messiah as pre-existent, precisely under the name of Son of Man—without doubt in pursuance of the same notion which we have just indicated as suggested in Dan. vii. 13. (2) That Jesus in John iii. 13 thinks of Himself directly as the Son of Man come down from heaven, and living and moving in heaven—*οὐκτοῦ οὐρανοῦ καράβας, οὐ νιῶς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, οὐ δὲν ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ.* This should remove all doubt from any impartial reader that the pre-existence of the Johannine Christ was His pre-existence as the Son of Man. But that throws clear light upon the whole notion. Jesus thinks of Himself as pre-existent, not because He knew Himself to be a second God, and remembered a former life in heaven, but because He recognised Himself in Daniel's image as the bearer of the kingdom of heaven, and because this Son of Man, as well as the kingdom which He brings to earth, must spring from heaven. That the ideal man existed from eternity in God, is the truth which He grasped, and to which He gave concrete intellectual form. And He did assuredly view the ascension of the Son of Man to where He was before as the return to an eternal home; but everyone must allow that He knew that the Son of Man in that former existence was no corporeal man such as now was on earth; and if that is granted, we have the proof that the pre-existence, though presented in a concrete way, is simply an ideal conception. The other declaration (viii. 58), "Before Abraham was, I am," can, of course, in its laconic brevity be interpreted according to any conception of pre-existence which one brings with him; but our conception, as appears to us, gives it the meaning most in keeping with the context. The controversy between Jesus and His opponents has risen high, and the feeling of the distance between Him who is from above and them who are from beneath, becomes ever more keen. Contemptuously they replied to His idea that

Abraham rejoiced to see His day: "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" Then the feeling of eternity flashed up in Him and made Him answer them majestically: "Before Abraham was, I am." He does not say, I was; His point is not His having been before, but His eternal being. Abraham is only a transient appearance—He is the appearance of the Eternal in time. Before God thought of the birth of Abraham, He stood before Him, through whom He would lead humanity to the goal of its destiny, the Alpha and Omega of His decrees. The necessity of our conception is most clear in that passage in which the traditional interpretation confides most: *καὶ νῦν δόξασόν με σύ, πάτερ, παρὰ σεαυτῷ τῇ δόξῃ, γὰρ εἰχον πρὸ τοῦ τὸν κόσμον εἶναι παρὰ σοὶ* (xvii. 5). If this spoke of a glory not reserved as reward in heaven for the perfected sons of God, but really possessed by Him before His birth, and laid aside for a time to be resumed by Him, how could He ask it back, and ask it as a reward for having glorified the Father on earth? (ver. 4). That which one possesses by nature, and has voluntarily laid aside for a time, he neither needs to ask, nor can its return be a reward for service rendered in the interval. But there is something more than this here. For wherein does the glory consist which Jesus asks as reward of His work on earth, and of which He says He had it with the Father before the world was? According to ver. 2 it consists in that exaltation or glorification in which He can glorify the Father by conferring eternal life on all flesh, in which as the sun in the spiritual heaven of humanity He can communicate to all whom the Father has given Him the saving power which He developed in Himself on earth. The possibility of such a position was first won by Jesus through His life and death on earth, so that in point of fact it forms the divine reward of that life and death; how then could He have possessed it *realiter* before the world was? It is an absurdity, it is a condemnation of His life-work as an empty phantasmagoria, which the traditional interpretation thrusts upon Him. If, without entertaining this view, we fall back upon the theory that the *παρὰ σεαυτῷ* of the exaltation and the *παρὰ σοὶ* of the pre-existence are absolutely equivalent terms, and that thus the passage describes simply a return to the *status quo ante*, we must renounce any real thought on

the subject, and be content to hold fast a confused notion which tradition has brought to us. The similarity of *παρὰ σεαυτῷ* and *παρὸ σοὶ* proves simply that the writer—for we cannot speak of them as well authenticated words of Jesus Himself—has marked the parallelism of two acts of God, the eternal decree and the accomplishment of it, for which Jesus now is praying, but he does not dwell on the distinction of the two, or give it prominence in expression.<sup>1</sup> Finally, as to the passage xvii. 24, the ὅτι ἡγάπησάς με πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, the favourite modern conclusion, that God could only love a person standing *realiter* over against Him, would have very much astonished the biblical thinkers. When Jeremiah in the name of God wrote the words, “I knew thee before I formed thee in the womb” (Jer. i. 5), when Paul cried to the readers of his Epistle to the Ephesians, ἐξελέξατο ἡμᾶς ἐν αὐτῷ πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου (Eph. i. 5), they did not imagine that the human persons in question must have *realiter* pre-existed in order to be thus known, chosen, and loved by God. This passage (xvii. 24) rather confirms our whole explanation of the pre-existence of Jesus. God loved Jesus before the world was, but according to vv. 23, 26, He loves with the same love those whom He has given to Jesus; and to this love, not to His eternal nature, Jesus traces back the glory in question. It is not therefore an inner mystery of the divine nature with which these declarations deal, but, as elsewhere in the New Testament, it is the eternal thoughts of God’s love for the world of men. This idea of divine love is first embodied in the idea of the one man who is the perfect image of God and the ideal of all God’s children, and from Him it is extended to include all who will through Him fulfil their eternal destiny (xvii. 22–24). Or how would that participation in the same love and glory which the eternal Father gives to the Son, be at all conceivable in the case of other men, if this Son were a being *toto caelo* different from believers, and had not pre-existed in God from the first as the Son of Man, the firstborn of many brethren?

<sup>1</sup> The *εἰτῶς ιστίς ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν* in Matt. v. 3 reads quite as if they already had it, and yet can only mean, it is intended for them, prepared for them by God.

### § 9. HEAVENLY MISSION AND DESCENT

But is not the Gospel, apart from those four passages, full of the consciousness of pre-existence, and indeed of such a pre-existence as presupposes a personal passing over from the higher world into the earthly, and with it the remembrance of a personal existence in that higher world? It may indeed seem so to those who read the Gospel through the spectacles of dogmatic tradition or the critical hypothesis, and it is well to examine the various impressions that tend in that direction. First of all, we have to consider the many phrases in which mention is made of a coming into the world, or of being sent into the world. Do these presuppose a previous personal existence? So little do they, in and of themselves, presuppose this, that even the Baptist can speak of one who sent him (*ὁ πέμψας με*, i. 33), and bears the name of one *ἀπέσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ* (i. 6). Nothing else is meant by that emphatic "coming" or "being sent," which, indeed, is also found in the Synoptics (Matt. v. 17, x. 34, 40, xi. 3), than the Messianic appearance, and the divine commission lying at its basis. And as to the *εἰς τὸν κόσμον* which John likes to add (cf. e.g. iii. 19, ix. 39), it often means nothing else than the world of public life, as the special application of the expression to the apostles proves—*καθὼς ἐμὲ ἀπέστειλας εἰς τὸν κόσμον, κἀγώ ἀπέστειλα αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν κόσμον* (xvii. 18). In other cases, such as x. 36 (*δὺν ὁ πατὴρ ἡγίασεν καὶ ἀπέστειλεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον*), where the *ἀγυάζειν*, according to Jer. i. 5 Sir. xlvi. 4, xlix. 7, probably signifies the choice before birth, or xvi. 28, where the *ἐλήλυθαι εἰς τὸν κόσμον* is contrasted with the *ἀφίημι τὸν κόσμον*, that is, the departure by death, it is certainly to be thought of as the entrance into the earthly existence. But, even then, there lies in the expression no allusion to a previous personal life; every notable man may be described as sent into the world, and of every child that is born it may be said, *ἔρχεται εἰς τὸν κόσμον*, it comes into the world (cf. xvi. 21, *ἔγενηθη ἄνθρωπος εἰς τὸν κόσμον*). The people say (vi. 14) even of the expected Deuteronomic prophet (Deut. xviii.), who was certainly not conceived by the nation as pre-existent, *ὁ προφήτης ὁ εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἔρχόμενος*; and in his First Epistle John says, iv. 1: *πολλοὶ ψευδο-*

*προφῆται ἐξεληλύθασιν εἰς τὸν κόσμον.* It should be noted that the Johannine Christ nowhere describes His coming into the world as His own resolve. It is somewhat different with the passages which give expression, not merely to the whither, but the whence of His sending, those numerous phrases in which Jesus declares of Himself *an ἐκ τῶν ἀνω, ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, ἐκ οὐ παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐ παρὰ τοῦ πατρός,*—either *εἰναι* or *ήκειν, ἐξεληλυθέναι, καταβεβηκέναι* (e.g. vi. 38, viii. 23, viii. 42, xvi. 27, etc.); they have a larger meaning. Indeed, the simple “from above” and not “from beneath,” “from God and not from this world,” does not describe, as it may seem, a descent, much less a unique descent, though—just as in the similar expression *ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας εἰναι* (xviii. 37)—a descent does underlie the linguistic image. On the contrary, the *ἐκ θεοῦ εἰναι* (viii. 47) is spoken of quite generally as something possible to men (*οὐ ὅν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ τὰ ρήματα τοῦ θεοῦ ἀκούειν διὰ τούτο ὑμεῖς οὐκ ἀκούετε, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἔστε*), and in xvii. 14 the *οὐκ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου εἰναι* is expressly asserted of the disciples in the same sense as it holds good of Jesus (*ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου οὐκ εἰσὶν, καθὼς ἐγώ οὐκ εἰμὶ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμουν*). It therefore designates solely the fundamental Godward direction of the heart and life, in contrast with the worldly. The “coming from heaven,” “being of God,” “having proceeded from the Father,” have a larger meaning, but the direction is the same; they trace back the heavenly divine character which Jesus shared with others, but which He knew He possessed before others, to its origin in a special heavenly or divine descent. And at this point we certainly come upon a fact of His consciousness which is not expressed in the synoptic discourses, though it very well agrees with all that we have established from both sources regarding His self-consciousness. Though He could include Himself with others and with His disciples in the idea of the *ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ* and *οὐκ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου εἰναι*, there yet remained a distinction—the distinction which is expressed by the discriminating “your Father and My Father.” That which in their case existed in a measure was in Him absolute; that which in their case was awakened and nourished by Him had its source in Him. The longer He lived He could the less conceal from Himself the perfect uniqueness in which He stood over against all His

brethren ; He giving out of a heavenly fulness, they at best receiving ; they transformed by the divine second birth, He acting, thinking, feeling from an original inborn harmony with God. The sense of a unique purpose in His life, of proceeding from God in a sense which was true of no other, the consciousness of having been born directly out of a higher world into this, could not but grow up in Him. This very consciousness He expresses when He speaks of " coming down from heaven," " having proceeded from God," when He calls Himself the *παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ δύτη* (vi. 46). But He did not mean by this a bodily transference from heaven to earth of which He retained a remembrance. No doubt this consciousness of a descent from God, a heavenly descent, went along with that consciousness of pre-existence which we have found above and endeavoured to understand ; the consciousness of having descended from a higher world must have led to the notion of that world as His true and original home ; and the consciousness of belonging properly to the eternal and not to the temporal world, must have begotten in Him the notion of having been transplanted from that eternal world into the temporal. But the deepest mysteries of existence belong to the world of spirit, and not to some higher world of sense ; when they are expressed in human words it must be in figurative language, and anyone is on wholly wrong lines who in interpreting the Gospel of John, fails to consider this element of metaphor in its thought and language, and like the foolish people of Capernaum insists on the literal sense of what was spiritually conceived, in order to extort the confirmation of confused and impossible dogmatic notions. The analogy of Holy Scripture, according to which it must be expounded, condemns such a mode of exposition. When James says of every good and perfect gift that it comes from above, he does not mean that it exchanges a heavenly locality for an earthly, but simply seeks to express its origin from God. When Jesus asks the high priest whether the baptism of John was *ἐξ οὐρανοῦ* (Mark xi. 30), He does not mean that it formerly took place in heaven, but that it sprang from divine revelation and not from human discovery. In the same way, He did not regard heaven really and literally as the place of His former abode ; it was for Him the kingdom of

eternal blessedness, the sphere of God's personal life from which He was derived, and so He was able to say in one and the same breath—in the passage iii. 13 to be expounded later on—that He came down from heaven and that He is in heaven; that is, He is in constant intercourse with God even on earth, and lives and moves in the world of eternal blessedness.<sup>1</sup> His declarations of having come down from heaven or of having proceeded from God, must be understood according to this canon if they are to be understood biblically and rationally. I cannot find that the passage, xvi. 28, urged with special emphasis against this exposition,—ἐξῆλθον ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ ἐλήλυθα εἰς τὸν κόσμον πάλιν ἀφίημι τὸν κόσμον καὶ πορεύομαι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα,—demands, or even permits another interpretation.<sup>2</sup> The phrase, “leaving the world and returning to the Father,” is certainly only a figurative expression for the glory which Jesus won by passing through death;

<sup>1</sup> The popular way of looking on ὁ ἦν ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ as equivalent to an imperfect, yields—apart from the grammatical obscurity—a very lame meaning and a superfluous idea. For when it has just been said, He came down from heaven, there is no need of saying that He once was in heaven. On the contrary, taken as a present, it yields a significant and coherent idea. No one has risen to the knowledge of the *πνεύμα*, save the one who has sprung from heaven, and ever lives and moves in heaven; cf. i. 51.

<sup>2</sup> I regret that I cannot agree with Dr. Weiss about this passage. With reference to my *Christology of the New Testament* he writes concerning this passage as follows:—*N. T. Theol.* ii. p. 334: “Any possibility of referring this to anything else than to a coming forth from a heavenly existence with the Father, is excluded by the fact that it is contrasted with a leaving the world and going home to the Father, which must admittedly be taken as His exaltation to heaven. Without entering into these decisive instances Beyschlag wishes by an appeal to the figurative character of these expressions to find in them indications of the supernatural birth.” I do not find the supernatural birth but the supernatural descent of Jesus indicated therein, which is a different thing. But as to the decisive instances, I also understand the passage as referring to a going forth from a heavenly existence with the Father, but to me this existence is an existence in God and not an existing beside God, and in like manner the exaltation is not a transference into another space above the earth, but the passing into a divine unlimited form of existence. The difference between us is, as to whether the original being with the Father is the personal existence of a διύτερος Θεός, beside God the Father, or the existence of the future Christ in the heart of God. The first I am neither able to think nor to harmonise with the Gospel of John, in which the Father is ὁ Θεός, and ὁ Θεός alone is the Father.

for in reality Jesus does not leave the world, but remains with His own, and He does not need to go in quest of the Father who is in Him and in whom He is; and in the same way the previous phrase, "I came forth from the Father and am come into the world," is not to be understood of an actual leaving of the heavenly Father's house and an exchange of that for an earthly dwelling. Otherwise birth and death, with the deeper meaning which they had in the mind and life of Jesus, as origin from God and perfection in God, would form no true logical contrast.

#### § 10. THE SOURCE FROM WHICH HE DERIVES HIS KNOWLEDGE OF HEAVENLY THINGS

If, as has been accepted for centuries without investigation, and is still maintained, the Johannine Christ traces back His higher knowledge and revelation of heavenly things to a reminiscence of a pre-existent state, so that when He speaks of having seen the Father, the expression must be placed in the time before His birth, then we must make up our minds to regard the traditional conception of the pre-existence as a previous personal life which the Logos as eternal Son enjoyed in intercourse with the Father, as at least a part of the Johannine view.<sup>1</sup> Certainly, when one reads, vi. 46, οὐχ ὅτι τὸν πατέρα ἐώρακεν τις· εἰ μὴ ὁ ὥν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ, οὗτος ἐώρακεν τὸν πατέρα, it is very tempting to add in thought, "when He was yet with the Father." Or when the Baptist says, iii. 31, 32, "He that cometh from heaven is above all; and what He hath seen and heard, that He testifieth," the exposition is suggested, "what He hath seen and heard in heaven before His coming." And yet the Baptist continues, ver. 34: "For He whom God hath sent speaketh the word of God; for God hath not given the Spirit by measure" (to Him He hath sent): he therefore deduces the speaking of the word of God attributed to the Messiah from the Holy Spirit given to Him without measure,—consequently, not from a seeing

<sup>1</sup> Weiss, *N. T. Theol.* ii. p. 332: "Pondering the origin of this unique knowledge of God, Jesus becomes sensible that it is not to be traced back to any point of His earthly life, or to any analogy in the experience of other God-sent men. It is a completed fact of the past to which He refers, and which continues only in its effects (*ἴμπαξα*)."

and hearing in a previous life. That whole notion, however it may commend itself to a reader entangled in preconceived opinions, appears on closer examination to be unnatural. If we refer phrases such as ἀ ἐγώ ἔωρακα παρὰ τῷ πατρὶ (viii. 38); τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ἣν ἤκουσα παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ (viii. 40); καθὼς ἐδίδαξέν με ὁ πατήρ, ταῦτα λαλῶ (viii. 28), to the pre-existence, there arises a positively meaningless notion of the Logos. Is the Logos the sum of all God's thoughts, the fountain of all eternal wisdom and truth, to be thought of as a child sitting at the Father's feet in order to be taught by Him, in order to see and hear the eternal facts and truths? That is not an idea of the Logos with which one can credit the evangelist, whoever he may be. Here also we need, instead of expounding Scripture by preconceived dogmatic opinions, to expound it according to the standard of its own usage, in order to find the correct and intelligible view. To see and to hear in the spiritual sense are the simple designations of how the prophets received the revelation, as it came to them not in some heavenly pre-existence, but in their earthly life. In this sense Jesus (v. 37) reproaches the heads of the Jewish people, that they had "neither heard the voice of God, nor seen His face"; that is, they had in no way received His revelation, nor believed in Him whom God hath sent. In the same sense He says of Himself and the Baptist in common, iii. 11: "We speak what we know, and testify what we have seen." This having seen did not take place in a pre-existent state in His case any more than in that of the Baptist. Jesus no doubt exalts Himself above the Baptist and all the prophets. That which in the Old Testament is declared alone of Moses, that he saw God face to face (Num. xii. 8), is claimed by Jesus for Himself in a higher sense and with greater truth, and is based on His descent from God, on that original endowment which has conferred on Him a spiritual insight into the divine and eternal such as no one had before or after Him. But in doing so He just as little places it in the pre-existent state, as Moses' seeing of God was placed by the Old Testament in a pre-existent state. The meaning of the passage already adduced (vi. 44-46) is explained in accordance with this. "Everyone who hears and learns of the Father cometh to Me: not that any man

hath seen the Father save He who is of God, He hath seen the Father." That is to say, a certain revelation of God is given to every man in order to put him on the way to Christ; but the perfect revelation, the open vision of God, is given directly to none; only He who is derived from God knows Him perfectly as the Father, and can reveal Him to others as the Father. The assertion that there was no completed fact in the earthly life of Jesus on which He could have looked back with an *έώρακα τὸν πατέρα*, is without foundation. That fundamental revelation in which He felt that He was called to be the Messiah, and in which His divine Sonship first arose on Him in its full meaning, might have been described as "seeing the Father." When the heavens opened to Him at His baptism, and the voice of God sounded to His heart, "Thou art My beloved Son," then He saw the Father face to face, for then He received the decisive impulse to reveal Him to His brethren. Or is it unsuitable and un-Johannine to speak of revelations of God within the earthly life of Jesus? Jesus Himself acknowledges such, even in the Fourth Gospel. When He says, v. 30, "I can do nothing of Myself: as I hear I judge," He means an *ἀκούειν παρὰ τοῦ πατρός*; and when He says, v. 20, "The Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth: and He will show Him greater works than these," we have then an *όραν παρὰ τῷ πατρὶ* in addition to the *ἀκούειν παρὰ τοῦ πατρός*, and a present seeing as well as a future (*δεῖξει*), that is, a continuous revelation of God in the life of the Lord.<sup>1</sup> How could there fail to be, in virtue of that decisive revelation of God in which He once for all knew the Father and His own mission, and in His constant Messianic intercourse with God, a continuous unfolding throughout His life of new details of His purpose, and continuous divine directions and unveilings of what the Son must do and suffer in the course of His life? The conclusion will now hold good that since Jesus spoke of seeing (or being

<sup>1</sup> This against Weiss, *N. T. Theol.* ii. 332, who writes the remarkable statement: "He nowhere speaks of divine revelations or visions which were imparted to Him here on earth, as Beyschlag undertakes to prove." I did not know that I had undertaken to prove visions in the life of Jesus. But were there no revelations? Not even at the baptism and transfiguration? Was there no answer even to what He sought as a Son in prayer?

shown) and hearing divine things both in the present and in the yet future, He cannot have brought the knowledge of them with Him ready made from His pre-existent life. For the expedient which regards Him as having brought with Him ready made the treasure of eternal knowledge, but as always having to receive from God directions for its use on earth, is far too marvellous.<sup>1</sup> Our evangelist could surely see that He who had the absolute knowledge, would also have along with it the wisdom to use it. But it may be still more convincingly proved that the deduction of the higher knowledge of Jesus from His pre-existence is a misconception imported into the Johannine discourses. The proofs are as follows:—(1) Jesus exclaims to the Jews, viii. 38: “I speak what I have seen with my Father; and ye do what ye have heard from your father.” Here manifestly He contrasts His having seen with God and their having heard from the devil, as formally analogous to one another, in the one case divine revelations, in the other diabolical suggestions. The distinction of ὄραν παρὰ τῷ πατρὶ and ἀκούειν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς seems to have been chosen to mark the contrast of God, who shows Himself clearly, and the devil, who hides and whispers; but any insistence on this distinction is forbidden by ver. 40, where Jesus quite in the same way declares the ἀκούειν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς of Himself. It was as little in His mind to say that the Jews brought with them to the earth, from a hellish pre-existence, their murderous thoughts, as it was in His mind to say that He brought with Him from His heavenly pre-existence the divine truths which He speaks. (2) In chap. xv. 15, Jesus says to His disciples in the farewell discourse: πάντα, ἀ ηκουσά παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς μου, ἐγνώρισα ὑμῶν. It needs no proof that the knowledge of the pre-existent Logos or Son must be an actual omniscience which penetrates all the mysteries in the world; but it needs little proof that Jesus did not communicate to His disciples a thorough knowledge of all enigmas presented by the world, or all that an omniscient Spirit might contain; He showed only what needs to be known for the salvation of sinful humanity. Now, if “all things that He has heard of the Father” has the latter meaning, it is evident that the hearing spoken of cannot belong to a

<sup>1</sup> So Weiss, *N. T. Theol.* ii. 336.

divine pre-existence, but only to a limited earthly life. (3) Finally, the remarkable passage already alluded to (iii. 13) is decisive. Here Jesus proves His fitness for speaking of heavenly things, and gives a reason for reproaching them for not believing in Him in the words: "And no man hath ascended into heaven, save He who came down from heaven, even the Son of Man who is in heaven." He therefore declares His threefold relation to heaven; He has come down from heaven, that is, He has sprung from a higher world; He is (continuously) in heaven, that is, He lives and moves in that higher world, and rests at all times on God's heart (cf. i. 18: ὁ δὲ εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρός); finally, He has ascended up to heaven, and on this He directly bases His power to speak of heavenly things. There can, of course, be no reference here to the subsequent ascension, which, indeed, cannot be the source of His present knowledge. The reference is to a spiritual ascension in the sense of Deut. xxx. 12; Prov. xxx. 4, that is, an inner attainment to the vision of God, a living knowledge of heavenly things. The facts that He came down from heaven and was in heaven are subordinate to and account for this ascent to heaven; that is, because He had come from a higher world, and lived and moved in it, He also possessed the capacity of raising Himself to an understanding of its mysteries and to the knowledge of the divine purpose. The passage is most instructive as regards the whole circle of ideas with which we have hitherto been occupied, and as regards the relation of idea and image in it. It is clear that the passage refers to the same epoch-making experience as the *έώρακα τὸν πατέρα* in chap. vi. 46, in so far as *ἀναβέβηκεν* describes a particular moment of life. But it is no less clear that it seals the proof of the reception of His heavenly knowledge as taking place within the earthly life of Jesus; for that which is attained by a spiritual ascension from the earth to heaven is certainly not brought with Him to earth in virtue of a personal descent from heaven.

### § 11. CONCLUSION

All that in John goes beyond the synoptic account of the testimony of Jesus to Himself is thus explained in a way

which does not compel us to assume any substantial diversity between the original thoughts of Jesus and the report of them, however free, much less any inconsistency of John's account with that of the Synoptics or with itself.<sup>1</sup> And that is really a proof of the correctness of our exposition. While the traditional exposition is scarcely able to conceal the internal contradiction between its idea of pre-existence and the main facts of Jesus' testimony to Himself as John records them, it is wholly unable to explain the complete omission in the Synoptics of what orthodoxy counts supreme; on the other hand, the critical conception is forced to admit that its Logos idea is not developed in the Johannine discourses, and so that idea does not explain Jesus' discourses in John. Our view is that the Johannine record has enriched the synoptic presentation of the self-consciousness of Jesus in some of its developments which might easily have remained unknown to the popular tradition; but the main outline and construction of the self-consciousness of Jesus is unchanged by John's contribution—it is free from contradiction in itself, and is as unique as simple. The addition to the Synoptics which the Johannine account makes is a pure gain, even for historic knowledge, in view of this result. Not only does the greater wealth of the Johannine narrative confirm the synoptic, which in many respects is scanty, but it supplements it by certain most inward, and, as it were, hidden features of glory, which perhaps none but the beloved disciple could have comprehended and preserved. In its portrayal of Jesus it shows us how deep a sense He had of being a stranger on the earth, although He took a loving interest in everything human; it

<sup>1</sup> The profound contradiction that runs through the testimony of Jesus to Himself in John as Weiss views it, the contradiction between the most express utterances of human dependence of the Son on the Father, and the consciousness of an eternal divine personality, cannot have escaped his own notice. Probably he reconciles his own mind to it by the Kenotic theory. But this theory, besides being unthinkable, is not merely foreign to the Gospel of John, but does not accomplish what it should. For heavenly knowledge could scarcely flow from a latent or surrendered consciousness of eternal Deity bound to earth; and in the very moment in which that consciousness awakes and breaks through as a memory, it must wither up any feeling of merely human dependence, and yet Jesus is able out of that feeling to pray the intercessory prayer.

shows His feeling that His true home was in a higher world, and at the same time His majestic consciousness of being the realisation in a human life of the idea of God's love, the personal realisation of the Eternal in time.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE FOUNDING OF SALVATION

It is one proof of the foregoing view of the self-consciousness of Jesus that the doctrine of the work of salvation following upon it is simply that which is found in the Synoptics. The doctrine on this subject is indeed in form peculiar, but it contains no foreign elements. The same facts as in the Synoptics are treated only in a new light, sometimes with greater brevity and sometimes with more detail.

#### § 1. THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN AND ETERNAL LIFE

In the synoptic report Jesus begins with announcing the salvation to be brought by the kingdom of heaven which is now near at hand, and the echo of this announcement is not entirely wanting in John. The kingdom of God appears in the introductory conversation, chap. iii. 3; and the *βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν*, according to a well-attested reading, appears also in ver. 5. The fact that henceforward this main idea of Jesus in the Synoptics vanishes from His teaching as given by John, makes its appearance here the more surprising, till we discover that its place is taken by a very common equivalent, *ζωή* or *ζωὴν αἰώνιος*. Even in the Synoptics, (eternal) life is such a complete equivalent for the kingdom of God, that entering into the kingdom of God, and entering into life, are put directly for each other (cf. Mark vii. 14 with ver. 21; Matt. xviii. 8, 9; Mark ix. 45, 47; Luke x. 25, xviii. 18, etc.), and therefore John has only exchanged the Jewish theocratic idea of salvation for a more general and mystic one used by Jesus Himself; for what else is eternal life than the kingdom of God, communion with God, especially

when viewed as salvation of the individual, as the possession that fills the individual soul? Accordingly, in our Gospel, the communication of "eternal life," or simply of "life," which is the same thing, is posited as the aim of Christ's mission and the summary of His work, just as in the Synoptics that aim is the setting up of the kingdom of God. "As the Father hath life in Himself (that is, is the original source of life), so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself," that is, to be the historical source of life for all (v. 26). "Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He may give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him" (xvii. 2). "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Now as in the Synoptics Jesus at one time thinks of the kingdom of heaven as already present, at another time as still future,—present as a germinating seed, future as a completed development,—so is it with eternal life in John. It is conceived as a goal of future perfection when mention is made of a *πηγὴ ιδατος ἀλλομένου εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον* (iv. 14), or of a *βρῶσις μένονσα εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον* (vi. 27); when it is said (iv. 36), *ὁ θερίζων κάρπον συνάγει εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον*, or (xii. 25), *ὁ μισῶν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τούτῳ εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον φυλάξει αὐτήν*; even in the collocation *ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωὴ* (xi. 25), the *ζωὴ* appears to be something brought about only by the resurrection. But still more frequently is life conceived as a present blessing, as the true inner life of the believer, which already delivers him from the power of death: *ὁ τὸν λόγον μον ἀκούων καὶ πιστεύων τῷ πέμψαντι με ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον, καὶ εἰς κρίσιν οὐκ ἔρχεται, ἀλλὰ μεταβέβηκεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν* (v. 24), an idea which is often and emphatically repeated (cf. vi. 40, 47, 54, viii. 51, x. 28, xi. 26). These observations about the concept *ζωὴ* already set aside a modern misconception, viz. the assertion made on the basis of xvii. 3, that the *ζωὴ* of the Johannine discourses of Jesus is the knowledge of God.<sup>1</sup> Though the statement:

<sup>1</sup> So Weiss, *N. T. Theol.* vol. ii. p. 350 f. Eng. trans. A blunder that is carried so far that it is said, p. 411, by appealing to v. 26, vi. 57: "As the Father and the Son are one, because they have in common the life of full knowledge of God," etc. The full knowledge of God by God?

“This is eternal life, to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent,” sounds like an explanation of the concept; yet it is evident that the intercessory prayer would be the most unsuitable place for giving the definition of a concept, and especially of one that had already been used throughout the whole Gospel without needing such definition. Evidently this statement in the prayer is only meant to express how and by what means Jesus has hitherto fulfilled (ver. 2) His commission to give eternal life to all flesh, viz. by making men know the Father as the only true God, and Himself as His ambassador; and so the *τοῦτο ἐστίν* stands here manifestly in the sense of rests upon, or is procured by,—it does not make eternal life mean simply the knowledge of God. Undoubtedly the evangelist regards knowledge and life as things that are practically very closely related, though in idea he regards them as distinct, just as life and faith remain distinct, notwithstanding his statement, *ὅ πιστεύων ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον*. If the concept *ζωὴ αἰώνιος* needed explanation, it would be given in the contrasts of *ζωὴ* and *θάνατος* (v. 24), *ζωὴ* and *ἀπώλεια* (iii. 16), or in the figures of the bread of life and the living water which satisfy the hunger and thirst of man (vi. 35, iv. 13, 14, vii. 37). But no explanation is required; *ζωὴ* is the true, satisfying, blessed life which the human soul derives only from communion with God.

### § 2. OTHER DESIGNATIONS OF THE BLESSING OF SALVATION

Although *ζωὴ* is John’s favourite expression for the salvation which Jesus brought to the world, it is not by any means the only designation of it, even apart from the *βασιλεία* of iii. 3, 5. Another idea which includes an element of knowledge in salvation is “the light,” with which the thought of life is united, in order fully to express the blessing of salvation (viii. 12: “he will have the light of life”). That “the light has come into the world” (iii. 19) is also a paraphrase of the *ηγγυκεν*, or *ἔφθασεν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν*, except that the kingdom of heaven in it appears as a divine revelation or enlightenment to a world lying in darkness (cf. xii. 46: ἐγὼ φῶς εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἐλήλυθα, ἵνα πᾶς

ο πιστεύων εἰς ἐμὲ ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ μὴ μείνῃ). Light is personified and applied to Jesus; just as in xiv. 6 He calls Himself the life, so in viii. 12 He calls Himself the light of the world. He is the life, inasmuch as He awakens men who are asleep in spiritual death to a new life of communion with God (v. 25). He is the light, inasmuch as by the revelation of God He enlightens those who are sitting in spiritual darkness. But even here there is no thought of any merely intellectual satisfaction. But, as already in the Old Testament, "darkness and the shadow of death" are parallel concepts, and as in the *σκοτία* from which men are to be redeemed, intellectual and ethical darkness, error and sin, are inseparably connected, so also in the light which Jesus brings and is, their opposites are inseparably connected. For God, whose revelation is this light, is the eternally true and eternally good at the same time, and therefore in His light the true and the good, that which enlightens the reason and that which sanctifies the will, are inseparably united. The truth, that is, the divine eternal truth, the revelation of God, is only another less figurative expression for the light, and as Jesus can say, "I am the light," He can also say, "I am the truth" (xiv. 6). But this truth, as a holy truth, as the revelation of the eternal Good, is something not merely to be known, but also to be followed. As the evangelist speaks of walking in the light (xii. 35), he also speaks of doing the truth (iii. 21),—though knowing the truth as the necessary preliminary to doing it is certainly not neglected (viii. 32). The concept δόξα, which appears in the intercessory prayer, may be adduced as a third designation of the blessing of salvation. This δόξα also is both a future and a present blessing. At one time Jesus prays for it as a reward for His life on earth (xvii. 5), and wills that His own may be with Him in His heavenly life to see it (ver. 24); but at another time He says He has already given it to them—κἀγὼ τὴν δόξαν, οὐ δέδωκάς μοι, δέδωκα αὐτοῖς, ἵνα ὁσιν ἐν καθὼς ἡμεῖς ἔν. The gift of miracles cannot possibly be meant here, as has been conjectured, for it is not this which makes believers one with each other, as the Father and the Son are one; still less could Jesus ask for that gift as a reward of His earthly life, and yet the δόξα which He asks as a reward,

and that which He already possesses and has communicated to His own, must be fundamentally the same. The δέξια is simply the glory of God, the splendour of the eternal light, that is, His glorious self-revelation, which had hitherto been contained and half concealed in Jesus, and had been communicated by Him to His own in His gospel (cf. i. 14); now He prays that it may be revealed fully according to its eternal idea (*ἵνει εἰληφον πρὸ τοῦ τὸν κόσμον εἰναι παρὰ σοι*), in order that His own may see it in this full manifestation, and enjoy it with Him. The harmony of John with the Synoptics is shown once more in the fact that, along with these descriptions of the blessing of salvation which are peculiar to him, the simple Christian expression *σωτηρία* is not wanting (iv. 22; the verb *σώζειν*, *σώζεσθαι*, iii. 17, v. 34, x. 9, xii. 47); it is the opposite of that *ἀπώλεια* which would overtake man without the divine salvation.

### § 3. THE MEANS OF SALVATION

Now as Jesus is the personal Mediator of salvation to whom the Father has given ζωὴν ἔχειν ἐν ἑαυτῷ, as He is the way, the truth, and the life, His whole work in salvation will aim at the communication of Himself. But how is that done? First of all, as the Synoptics also say, by the word which is the universal instrument which God has given for this communication. As in the Synoptics, so also in John, Jesus is the Sower who in His teaching scatters the seeds of eternal life (iv. 36, 37, where we have the same image as in Mark iv., Matt. xiii., Luke viii.). That which above all attracts and holds His disciples is "the words of eternal life," which He has like no other man (vi. 68). It is His gospel that He offers to the Samaritan woman under the figure of a "fountain of living water," which can for ever allay the thirst of the soul, and which can even create in the heart a well of water springing up into everlasting life (iv. 14; cf. vii. 37, 38). And this view of the word in His teaching, as an essential means of salvation, runs through the whole Gospel from beginning to end, so that one sees, even more clearly than in the Synoptics, that it was Jesus' own original view. Whosoever "abideth in His words is recognised as His

disciple indeed," and the truth when known will make him (morally) free, will free him from the bondage of sin (viii. 32). "He that heareth My words, and believeth on Him that sent Me (an expression which in its synoptic simplicity reminds us of Mark i. 14, 15), hath eternal life" (v. 24). Again: "He that receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken will judge him at the last day" (xii. 48). "His disciples are already clean, because of the word which He hath spoken to them" (xv. 3). "If they abide in His words, and His words abide in them, they will be able to ask what they will from the Father" (xv. 7). Thus in the intercessory prayer Jesus can find His whole life-work in having delivered to His own the words which the Father had given Him (xvii. 8), and even before Pilate He described it as the essence of His mission to bear witness to the truth (xviii. 37). And is this not reasonable? If His doctrine is not His word but the Father's, that is, God's word (vii. 16, 17, xii. 44-50), if His words are on that account spirit and life, they must be able to beget, save, and sanctify life. But in John also we see how the experience came to Him which called forth the great saying (Matt. xi. 25), that His words remain inoperative where He Himself is not received, and is not allowed to rule the heart and win its love; and so, both in John and the Synoptics, though John's account is fuller and more distinct, His preaching passes from speaking of the saving power of His words to insisting on the saving power of His person, and of personal fellowship with Him. Both methods of teaching run significantly alongside of each other through the Gospel, testifying that neither of the two excludes the other. Sometimes He says: "Believe Me, believe Him who sent Me," that is, believe in the word; but at other times He says: "Believe *in* Me,"—just as in Luke ix. 26 the words *έαν τίς μου ἀκούσῃ τῶν ρήμάτων καὶ μὴ φυλάξῃ*, and *ό αθετῶν ἐμὲ καὶ μὴ λαμβάνων τὰ ρήματά μου*, stand close beside each other (xii. 47, 48). But we may also perceive in John the trace of a gradual development of the teaching of Jesus, such as we have noticed in the Synoptics, from His early confidence in the might of the Gospel itself, up to His perception that His surrender to death is necessary to salvation. After the fifth chapter has

set before us how the resistance and attacks of the "wise and prudent" threw the Messiah back more than before on His sublime self-consciousness, the sixth chapter is purposely devoted to showing how that enlightened consciousness of being a Son grew into the consciousness of being a personal Saviour,—a fine parallel to, and exposition of, Matt. xi. 25–30. The great discourse about the bread of life, which is, of course, in this form a creation of the evangelist, comprehends to some extent the three stages of Jesus' doctrine of salvation which we distinguish in the Synoptics. It starts from the idea of the word as an essential means of salvation, for it speaks first only of the bread of life which the Son of Man gives, and which may be interpreted as one and the same with the living water of the fourth chapter (vi. 27). But then it advances to the "I am the bread of life," and in its varying phrases preserves this as its central idea. We have in this the idea that a personal living communion with Christ is necessary to salvation,—the same idea which Jesus afterwards, in different imagery, urges on His disciples in the discourse about the vine and its branches. Jesus is the personal manifestation of the life from God and in God which all men need, and therefore His person is the true means of salvation, the heavenly bread, the living and life-giving bread which has come down from heaven to the world. Only by eating this bread, that is, by receiving into ourselves this personal life, and assimilating it like food and drink, do we become partakers of the true life that overcomes death. But can a man walking among men within the limits of an earthly existence communicate himself to such an extent as to dwell in the hearts of many, possibly of all, or become the food and drink of their inner life? Jesus did not raise this question in the midtime of His ministry, when He began to preach, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"; it was first forced on Him when face to face with His approaching death. But the evangelist, in a free suggestive combination, has here introduced an idea which in the actual life of Jesus only appears in the institution of the Supper. That idea is: "In order to become the bread and drink for all, to be able to communicate Myself inwardly for the eternal life of all, I must sacrifice My

personal life, and through death pass into another and higher form of existence, I must let My body be broken and My blood be shed for the life of the world." That is the turn which the evangelist gives the discourse on the bread of life (vi. 51), by making Jesus go on to say, not, "I am the bread of life," but, "The bread which I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." It is the idea that His death is necessary to salvation which here stands out in the development of His doctrine of salvation; but this idea calls for independent discussion.

#### § 4. SAVING SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DEATH OF JESUS

The train of thought hitherto pursued leads us to recognise an indirect necessity of the death of Jesus for salvation; His death was the passage into a state of glory in which He could act effectively, and truly live within His own. And this idea, which we have in the Synoptics in Luke xii. 49, 50, is also contained in the institution of the Supper, and is repeatedly expressed by Jesus in John. "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I go away, I will send Him unto you" (xvi. 7). "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." The idea everywhere, just as in vi. 51 f., is that of being set free by death as a spiritual and living power, a *πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν*, which can really find entrance to the susceptible soul, and so reproduce its own inmost nature in many; that is, He fixes attention, not so much on the death as the saving fact, as on the resurrection and what follows from it, the exaltation and glorification. But He knew also a direct necessity of His death for salvation. His death, indeed, was not at the first a certainty to Him; only by a late Johannine interpretation is the thought of His death imported into earlier words, such as ii. 19–21, iii. 14. But as He saw that men love darkness rather than the light (iii. 19), that they hate the light which has come into the world, because it reproves their evil works (vii. 7), God's purpose became clear to Him. Even in that guilty resolve to extinguish the light that has appeared He recognised the purpose of His heavenly Father

to glorify Him through apparent defeat, and to make the utmost exertion of the powers of evil which rule the world result in a triumph of holy love which should set the world free. "A hireling who is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not," He says (x. 12), in view of His threatened death,—"a hireling seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth, and scattereth the sheep. I am the Good Shepherd, and lay down my life for the sheep." The mortal conflict between the cause of God's kingdom and the self-seeking of the authorities, which was being waged in Israel, must have ended with the defeat of the little flock gathered by Jesus, if He had not made it one with Himself and carried it onward in apparent defeat to spiritual victory. That situation and its decision, however, were not of temporary, but of permanent and universal interest. The spirit which in Israel resisted Jesus, is the prince of this world, the spirit of selfishness, deceit, and hatred which rules the world, and which has a hold on all men but one (xiv. 30); this spirit of the world must be conquered by one for all, in order that his dominion in the world may once for all be broken, and power be won for all to tread him under their feet. It is this view which Jesus in xii. 31 f. sets forth with regard to His approaching death. "Now is the judgment of this world; now is the prince of this world cast out (dethroned). And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." The hour of decision between the spirit of this world and the Prince of eternal love has arrived. The world accomplishes its own judgment by revealing the completeness of its sinful and lost condition, and at the same time the impotence of its hatred and enmity to God. But the spirit of selfishness ceases to be the ruler of the world when the utmost possible sin is outdone by the unswerving obedience of Jesus, even unto death. A stronger than he has morally overcome this spirit, and from the heavenly throne which He obtains, in consequence of that victory, He will draw all men after Him by giving them His own victorious power over selfishness and sin. His death therefore says to His own, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (xvi. 33), as His victory is to be theirs also. That enables us to understand those utterances, in which a purifying and sanctifying significance is

attributed to His death for His own. The synoptic saying about the Son of Man who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and give His life a ransom for many (Matt. xx. 28), is to some extent in John's Gospel, in the symbolical action of the feet washing. That was the last service of love which, as a true servant, He would render for His own upon the cross, and it represented in its "cleansing," which is expressly mentioned, the influence which His surrender to death would have upon His own. For it is worthy of special notice, in the first place, that Jesus expressly repudiates the idea that His death is necessary to begin or to establish the moral purity of His own. "He that is bathed needeth not, save to have his feet washed, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean" (xiii. 10)—clean because of the word which I have spoken unto (xv. 3). His death therefore is not the first thing that purifies and sanctifies His own, for that is already done by the word of His teaching. His death is only to complete the work of cleansing which His whole intercourse with them as a teacher had begun. And it really has the power of completing it; for the highest act of divine love is to lay down life itself in obedience to God and in love for the brethren (x. 17, 18, xv. 13); how could such an act fail to cleanse from all remains of sinful self-seeking those who lay it to heart? Again, the words of the intercessory prayer, *ἵπερ αὐτῶν ἀγιάζω ἐμαυτὸν, ἵνα ὡσιν καὶ αὐτοὺς ἤγιασμένους ἐν ἀληθείᾳ* (xvii. 19) are a true parallel to the "for you" in the institution of the Supper,—like the passage (vi. 51) already discussed. There can be no doubt that these words refer to His self-consecration to death, and so the idea of sacrifice contained in the synoptic words of institution in their two-fold allusion to the Passover and the covenant sacrifice come here also into prominence. But here again we find no *ἀντί*, instead of, but *ὑπέρ*, for the advantage of, and the sacrificial death of Jesus is described, not as aiming at an atonement of the guilt of the disciples, but at their sanctification in (the) truth (ver. 17), by which is undeniably meant the ethical sanctification of their hearts and their walk. The image of the brazen serpent in iii. 14, even if Jesus meant it to allude to the death upon the cross, does not point to an atonement, but to recovery, that is, regeneration, and so the idea of

propitiation (cancelling of guilt) through the death of Jesus, although it is not unknown to the evangelist (1 John ii. 2), nowhere appears in Jesus' own words. That is an indication that if we are to think and teach according to the Scriptures, the idea of propitiation is not to be made the chief element to which the morally redeeming power of the death of Jesus must be subordinated, far less the exclusive element in the saving significance of that death. It is the cleansing and sanctifying aim of Jesus' sacrifice of Himself that appears here so emphatically, and what we have called the indirect saving significance of the death of Jesus is here united with the direct, for in the view of our Gospel the death of Jesus is assuredly to exercise a cleansing, sanctifying influence, not merely by the moral impression of a past event, but by the mighty spiritual influence which the Crucified exercises on His own, as the Risen and Glorified One. We may therefore say that the Johannine Christ, as we will find again in the teaching of Paul, and have already found in the synoptic institution of the Supper, places salvation not in His death *per se*, but in His death in connection with His resurrection and glorification. His death upon the cross was an incomparable act of obedience to the Father (xiv. 31) and of love to the brethren (xv. 13), and so it was the perfecting of His character; but it was also the reason of His exaltation and glorification. The two aspects are inseparable, and in both the death had a redemptive power upon His own.

#### § 5. GLORIFICATION OF JESUS AND SENDING OF THE SPIRIT

The death of Jesus therefore issues in an exalted life in which He was sure that He would exercise an enhanced activity and—simply in virtue of His life and death—would first attain to a full communication of Himself. “I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me” (xii. 32). The evangelist, in accordance with the literal mode of exposition of his time, has applied this ὁψωθήσαι ἐκ τῆς γῆς to the visible lifting up upon the cross; but Jesus assuredly had a more comprehensive and spiritual intention; He thought of His return to the Father, of His exaltation to glory which should result from His death, and for which He prayed in the

intercessory prayer (cf. vi. 62). Of the activity which He intends to exert in His state of exaltation Jesus speaks especially in His farewell discourse; but His utterances are twofold, and seem to be inconsistent with each other. At one time He comforts His disciples with the promise of His own return to an abiding blessed communion. He will not leave them orphaned, but only goes away that He may prepare a place for them in the eternal Father's house, and will then come again to receive them to Himself (xiv. 3, xviii. 28). A little while, and they should see Him no more: and again a little while, and they should see Him; and then no man should take their joy from them (xvi. 17-22). But at other times His words imply a continuous absence from them. They work and suffer here on earth, but He is in heaven with the Father, active in their interests, and specially He prays that they may have a substitute for His presence which till then they had enjoyed. He will send to them another Paraclete, that is, an Advocate, a Helper,<sup>1</sup> who will take His place and abide with them for ever, the Spirit of truth who proceedeth from the Father, whom the world cannot receive, and who shall lead them, the disciples, into all truth (xiv. 16, xvi. 7). It is natural to think of distinguishing between these two predictions so as to refer the first to the experience of the disciples at Easter, the latter to their experience at Pentecost; but the most recent attempt thus to distinguish only reveals the impossibility of establishing such an interpretation.<sup>2</sup> The promised reunion of Jesus with His disciples comprehends, of course, the facts of Easter, as is most perceptible in the words, "a little while, and ye shall not see Me: and again a little while, and ye shall see Me" (xvi. 16, 19-22); it also perhaps—in the passage xiv. 3, "I will come again, and receive you to myself; that where I am, there ye may be also"—comprehends the idea of the final parousia. It does not, however,

<sup>1</sup> Not Comforter, as Luther confusing *παράκλητος*, *advocatus*, with *παρακλήτης*, *consolator*, has translated.

<sup>2</sup> So Weiss, *N. T. Theol.* ii. 407, by assuming at the same time references to the final parousia (e.g. xiv. 3). When the assertion is there made, in opposition to Reuss, that "communion with Christ is not at all conceived as mediated by the Holy Spirit," we may ask, How then is it to be otherwise conceived?

exclude, but includes the intervening spiritual communion with the glorified One. The various promises are by no means exhausted by a visible return for a little, as on Easter Day, or by a far off reunion in a higher world; they refer to the establishment of a new and enduring communion of an essentially inward and spiritual kind. "I will not leave you orphaned; I will come to you. And on that day ye will know that I am in the Father, and ye in Me, and I in you. I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you; on that day ye shall ask me nothing." These are promises which the experience of the disciples at Easter did not exhaust. On the contrary, the relation of Jesus to His disciples, which was to begin after the resurrection, was described by Him repeatedly in words like these. He will reveal Himself to them in a perfect way (*ἐμφανίσω*, xiv. 21). He will speak with them no longer in parables, but will show them plainly of the Father (xvi. 21). He promises them that He and the Father will come to them, and make their abode with them (xiv. 23), in which He manifestly describes the very same relation as the occurrence at Pentecost made possible. It is plain that Jesus, while seeking to help His disciples over the abyss of separation by His comforting promises, used two figures in describing the future, which John has mixed, perhaps intentionally, in composing His farewell discourse. These two were as follows: first, that view of His personal return, or parousia, as coming immediately after His death (*ἀπ' ἀρτι*, Matt. xxvi. 64); an idea the most original and genuine form of which we shall probably discern by noting that resurrection, the mission of the Spirit, the hometaking of His own, were not separate facts in Jesus' view of the future, but composed one picture of victory, one connected future act. And, in the second place, was the Old Testament promise of the Spirit of God which in the Messianic time was to be poured out on all flesh. This promise had been recently revived by the Baptist, and from that Spirit He expected that His own should receive power from on high for the performance of their tasks in the world, and that what He left behind imprinted on their memories should be quickened and interpreted in their minds, and so He should be glorified in them (xvi. 14). Here then we

have—though much more abundantly attested—the same twofold mode of teaching as in the Synoptics. As Jesus there promised to His disciples, for their apostolic activity, the “Spirit of their Father,” who is to speak through them (Matt. x. 20; cf. Luke xxiv. 49), but at the same time reserved to Himself the founding and leading of His Church after His departure (Matt. xvi. 18, xviii. 20), and promised that He would remain with His own to the end of the world (Matt. xxviii. 20)—precisely so is it in the farewell discourse in John.

#### § 6. THE GLORIFIED CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

But how are these two modes of teaching to be reconciled with one another? It is evident that the two notions, on the one hand that Jesus is away in heaven and has a representative on earth, the Paraclete, and on the other that He is always present and has communion with His people on earth, mutually exclude each other as forms of representation. But it is just as evident that the ideas underlying these notions must be in unison, as Jesus could not have seriously thought of Himself as at the same time constantly absent from, and yet continuously present on the earth, but must have thought only of the change of form; His presence in the world was to be no longer visible but invisible, and he looked forward to it, now as a (sensual) separation from His own, and now as a (spiritual) reunion with them. Even this view will not solve the riddle to anyone who regards the glorified Christ and the Holy Spirit as two different persons. But the notion of the Holy Spirit as a third divine personality—a personality which is miraculously poured out and bestowed—is one of the most disastrous importations into the Holy Scriptures. When the Holy Spirit is spoken of in the Johannine farewell discourse as a person, when, for example, it is said of Him, “He will not speak of Himself; but what He heareth, that will He speak: and He will show you things to come; He will take of Mine, and will show it unto you” (xvi. 13, 14), that is just a pictorial personification, such as corresponds to the representation of the Spirit as another Advocate (with the Father) in the place of Jesus; while the same evangelist in his First Epistle treats the same Spirit impersonally as *χπλσμα* (anointing),

1 John ii. 26, 27. The Holy Spirit "hears" by means of the spiritual ears of those who have Him. He proclaims by the mouth of the prophet, precisely as He prays and cries "Abba" out of the heart of the believer (Rom. viii. 15, 26). He is the spirit and the life of Christ in the believer; He is—and this is the solution of the whole riddle—the Christ in us (Rom. viii. 9; cf. with ver. 10). There can be no doubt that that is also the meaning of the Johannine words concerning the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was not yet (viz. there was as yet no Holy Spirit in the New Testament sense), writes the evangelist (vii. 39), for Jesus was not yet glorified; by which he explains beforehand that the Holy Spirit as understood in the Christian doctrine of salvation is nothing else than the glorified Christ with us and in us. There was no way in which he and his readers could conceive of the Father and the Son as coming, and making their abode in them, except that the Spirit of the Father and the Son should possess and dwell in them. What distinction could they have imagined between, "I will manifest Myself to you" (invisibly, inwardly, spiritually), and, "The Spirit will glorify Me in you, and will explain to you all things that I have spoken unto you"? But Jesus Himself reduces both notions to a unity when He says in the farewell discourse: "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go away, I will send Him unto you" (xvi. 7). If I go not away, the Spirit, the Paraclete, will not come to you: that cannot be understood as meaning that He could not have prayed the Father while on earth to send the Spirit to His disciples. It can only be meant in the sense of that saying of the corn of wheat whose present form must be dissolved in order that it may be reproduced in another hidden but exalted form, in much fruit. In accordance with what we have already recognised to be Jesus' meaning and view of His death, the Saviour's life must change its form; He must no longer be seen as a man on earth when His work as such is done; as Saviour He must now appear as a spiritual power in order to exercise an effective influence on His own, and through them on the world; He must, as Paul says (1 Cor. xv. 45; cf. John vi. 63), become a *πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν*, in order to reappear as an eternal principle of life.

in the disciples after the temporary extinction of death. Notwithstanding this relative unity of the glorified Christ and the Holy Spirit, there still remains, according to the Johannine farewell discourses, a twofold distinction. First, the glorified Christ does not simply become a Holy Spirit present in the world and acting on it, but remains in His perfect personal existence with the Father above the world, as the sun remains in the heavens, and yet at the same time is lightening and warming the earth. Neither is His activity as Saviour exhausted in the spiritual effects He produces in His own, but He continues active in their interests, interceding with the Father, as it is said xiv. 13, 16 (even the *παντού* in the first passage has manifestly the significance of a mediating action; cf. xvi. 23). The meaning is clear: so long as Christ is not fully formed in believers, His mediatorial position between them and the Father, His *ὑπερεντυχάνειν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν*, as Paul names it (Rom. viii. 34; cf. 1 John ii. 1), must still continue, in virtue of which the Father grants to them, for love of Him, what He cannot yet do for love to them in the full sense of the word; but it is indicated that the object of this intercession is to make itself superfluous, and to bring the disciples more and more into an immediate and perfect relation of love to the Father (xiv. 23, xvi. 26, 27). The other distinction consists in this, that the activity of the Spirit, even on earth, has to some extent narrower limits than that of the glorified Christ. The Spirit is not independent; He cannot reveal anything really new, but—says Jesus—He will take of Mine and glorify Me (xvi. 13, 14). And this means that the spiritual life of Christendom, which has a subjective side, and therefore is a free inward development of the Christian consciousness, can never go beyond Christ, but can only more perfectly expound Him: it retains in His historical person the abiding source and perfect standard of its development. Nor is there any need for wishing to get past Him, for “all that the Father hath is Mine,” that is, the whole of God’s revelation of salvation is treasured up in Christ (ver. 15; Matt. xi. 25). A third and purely formal distinction may be adduced; in the Johannine farewell discourse the Holy Spirit is described with a certain onesidedness—no doubt from Old Testament influence—as a prophetic, not as an ethical

principle. He "teaches," "leads into all the truth," declares also things to come, that is, He is the principle of early Christian prophecy (xvi. 13); the activity which is directly indicated in the name Holy Spirit, and which Paul so decidedly ascribes to Him in Rom. viii., is not yet declared of Him. On the contrary, Jesus certainly ascribes this activity to Himself in the form of His glorified continuous life in His own; He not only declares and reveals, He communicates holy powers; He is the vine, and they the branches; without Him they can do nothing, nothing that would stand before God and in eternity. But His power, His glorified life, works in them, so that they bring forth much fruit under the purifying discipline of His heavenly Father, who guides their destiny, and they become inwardly richer and purer to the blessing of the world and the salvation of themselves (xv. 1 f.). And this sanctifying activity is, as the intercessory prayer lets us see, the real goal of His life, death, and continued life in them (xvii. 19).

## CHAPTER V

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF ETERNAL LIFE

Having now considered the fact of the founding of salvation in the teaching, self-sacrifice, and glorification of Jesus, we now pass to the progress of the realising of salvation as it is accomplished in the individual, in the Christian community, and in the predicted issues of the world. We shall bring together under the point of view of the development of eternal life, whatever the Johannine words of Jesus contain concerning the way of salvation, the community of salvation, and the completion of salvation.

#### § 1. WAY OF SALVATION

John's account of the way of salvation is in no way opposed to the synoptic, but it bears marks of that process of selection and amplification which has repeatedly been noted. The main points of it are contained in the conversation with Nicodemus, which is a sort of manifesto of Jesus. There is

no express mention of repentance and forgiveness of sin. The latter, except in the commission given to the disciples (xx. 23), never gets expression in the Fourth Gospel. On the other hand, in that introductory discourse, *μετάνοια*, just as in the Synoptics, is the fundamental condition of sharing in the kingdom of God, not the word but the thing: *ἔαν μή τις γεννηθῇ ἄνωθεν, οὐ δύναται ἴδειν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ* (iii. 3). The idea of the second birth of the new beginning of life required for "seeing," that is, coming to know or obtain the kingdom of God,<sup>1</sup> is manifestly nothing else than the profoundest idea of the change of mind, guarded against all superficial interpretations. This new beginning of life is more closely described—in connection probably with John's baptism of water, and the baptism of the Spirit which He predicted—as a birth by water and the Spirit (ver. 5); that is, as one which rests on a purifying washing (forgiveness of sin), and is to be produced by the Spirit, the divine principle of life; in the verses immediately following (6–8), the Spirit alone is emphasised as the determining agent. But although this idea of the new birth closely corresponds to the fundamental idea of eternal life dominating Jesus' doctrine of salvation, the Gospel does not refer to it again; perhaps for this reason, that only at His departure does Jesus promise to send the Spirit, whose presence is the presupposition of the birth from the Spirit, and therefore the full realisation of the demands which He makes on Nicodemus appears to be postponed to the time of His own glorification. In sharp contrast to the synoptic teaching, in which the preaching calls for the *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ*, which is the fulfilling of the law, *μετάνοια* as a fundamental requirement is replaced by faith, which is not, indeed, foreign to the Synoptics, but as thus emphasised is evidently a reflex of the mode of thinking peculiar to John. First of all, *πιστεύειν* is required as belief in the truth and divine origin of the preaching of Jesus (iii. 12, v. 24, 47, x. 25, 38, etc.), similarly Mark i. 15; an elementary kind of faith, to which faith because of the works

<sup>1</sup> We prefer the interpretation of *ἄνωθεν* = *iterum*, anew (Gal. iv 9), to the "from above" which has recently come into favour, because the rejoinder of Nicodemus (ver. 4) is only conceivable in the case of the former.

(or miracles) of Jesus, such as that, for example, with which Nicodemus came to Him (iii. 2), is related as one of an easier and inferior type (cf. xiv. 11). But the idea of faith is deepened in the phrases *πιστεύειν εἰς θεόν*, *εἰς Χριστόν*, for which we have also *πιστεύειν ἐν αὐτῷ* (iii. 15), or even *πιστεύειν εἰς τὸ δυομα (τοῦ νιοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ)*, that is, on the person and heaven-sent dignity of Jesus (iii. 18; cf. xvii. 11); or, finally, *πιστεύειν* simply (iii. 18, vi. 47). This *πιστεύειν εἰς* appears with special expressiveness in the passage (xiv. 1) in the sense of the synoptic *ἔχετε πίστιν θεοῦ* (Mark xi. 22); *πιστεύετε εἰς θεόν*, *καὶ εἰς ἐμὲ πιστεύετε*, where the fundamental significance of confident reliance and hearty trust is prominent. Without doubt the expression *πιστεύειν εἰς Χριστόν* (or xii. 36, *εἰς τὸ φῶς*), very rare in the Synoptics, but here exceedingly frequent, is, as regards its form, to be attributed to the evangelist himself, though in substance it coincides with certain synoptic expressions of heartfelt belief in Jesus as the Saviour, which are found here and there beside it, such as *ἔρχεσθαι πρὸς μέ* (v. 40, vi. 35, where the synonymity with *πιστεύειν εἰς ἐμέ* is clear, vi. 37; cf. Matt. xi. 28) *ἀκολουθεῖν ἐμοὶ* (viii. 12; cf. Matt. xvi. 24), or *λαμβάνειν ἐμέ* (xiii. 20; cf. the *δέχεσθαι*, Matt. x. 40; Luke ix. 48). The fashioning of this idea of faith reaches its climax in the sixth chapter, where faith in Christ is explained by the figure of eating the bread of life: "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall not hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst" (vi. 35). Accordingly, to believe in Christ is to receive Him inwardly, to appropriate Him inwardly, to let Him live and work in one,—a process by which the idea of the new birth is unquestionably realised. Of this faith it is clear that it immediately confers eternal life (*ἀμήν ἀμήν λέγω ὑμῖν, ὁ πιστεύων ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον*, vi. 47), for it has appropriated Christ who is the life (xiv. 6). A concept related to this of faith, which preserves it from any appearance of blind want of understanding, is that of knowledge; this is the reflection of faith in the thinking mind, the grasping and possession of the light which is again only another side of eternal life. Of course, a merely intellectual knowing is not meant, but a knowing with the heart, which in its biblical usage signifies the undivided unity of the spiritual activities. This knowing,

therefore, depends on moral conditions : he who willeth to do God's will, *γνώσεται περὶ τῆς διδαχῆς* (vii. 17). And it is morally operative, " You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free " (spiritually and morally, viii. 32). The world, it is said xiv. 17, cannot receive the Spirit of God, because it cannot see Him or know Him, that is, because it has not developed any capacity for the perception and knowledge of Him,—such a capacity is therefore the precondition of receiving Him. The world knows neither the Son nor the Father (xvi. 3); on the other hand, the disciples of Jesus know the Father as the only true God, and Jesus Christ as Him whom He hath sent, and in virtue of this knowledge—whose relationship with faith is very evident here—they have eternal life (xvii. 3). As to the conditions that produce this believing knowledge, this discerning faith, the Johannine assertions entirely agree with the synoptic ; those conditions lie in the gracious leading of God just as much as in the free self-determination of man. Man believes not because he wills to do so : God must teach him, must draw him to His Son, and give him to Him as His own (vi. 37, 44, 45, xvii. 9)—quite in the same way as it is said of the disciples, Matt. xiii. 11, " To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given "). But that is no arbitrary choice of grace ; they are all to be taught of God, but they do not all hear or learn (vi. 45). In many ways the Father testifies of the Son in order to lead men to Him ; thus, in the days of Jesus He testified by the miraculous works which He gave Jesus to perform, and which He Himself performed through Jesus (v. 36, xiv. 10). They were " signs," divine indications in the sphere of nature pointing to His spiritual salvation, and strengthened the weak faith of some (ii. 11, xi. 15), while they will judge the unbelief of those who resisted them (xv. 24). But the belief which rests solely on these signs is not yet the true faith (iii. 2, iv. 48) ; the true faith can do without sensible signs (xx. 29). The true faith must rest, not on sensible impressions, but on moral reasons : " He who willeth to do the will of God, that is, who is in earnest about doing the will of God, will become sensible whether this doctrine is of God " (vii. 17). That saying, even in the word *θέλειν*, shows how " the

drawing of the Father to the Son is but another name for the impulse of the human heart towards God, which although awakened by God is nevertheless an act of free will. Therefore the hungering and thirsting of the soul (for God's kingdom and righteousness, Matt. v. 6) is made prominent as the true drawing of God (vi. 35, viii. 37); those who bear this longing in their hearts, and do not stifle it, but live according to it,—those who in the introduction to the Sermon on the Mount are called blessed—who ἐκ θεοῦ, ἐξ ἀληθείας δύνται (viii. 47, xviii. 37), the *πρόβατα* who need the guidance of the Good Shepherd, and therefore listen for His voice and follow Him (x. 26, 27)—they attain to faith. It remains for us to consider how this eternal life, laid hold of by faith, is exhibited and confirmed in men. It is easy to conceive how faith may be represented as the sole condition of salvation, as the one true work of God which embraces in itself all ἔργα θεοῦ, since it unites with Christ, and through Him with the Father. When the people ask (vi. 28), "What shall we do that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answers, "This is the work of God, the work that truly pleases God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." That, however, does not exclude, but includes the idea that the possession of salvation through faith must approve itself morally in the whole range of the demands made by the will of God. The final question of the Son of God in the judgment of the world, according to v. 29, amounts to this, who are τὰ ἀγαθὰ ποιήσαντες, and who are τὰ φαῦλα πράξαντες? And faith itself includes the τὰ ἀγαθὰ ποιεῖν, and excludes the τὰ φαῦλα πράσσειν, for one cannot believe in Christ without loving Him, or love Him without keeping His commandments (xv. 10, 14); one cannot appropriate Christ without letting Him work within one; the sap of the vine which forces its way through the branches brings forth fruit in them according to God's arrangement (xv. 1 f.). But since the question here is not of natural necessity, but of a relation free in its origin and in its continuance, it is conceivable that the inner living connection with Christ may be broken up and the disciples be involved in the fate and judgment of the unfruitful branches (xv. 6). For that very reason it is necessary that the moral will of God, with all the inwardness and freedom

of our relation to it, should not lose the character of commandment. If Jesus speaks of commandments of the Father given to Himself (x. 18, xv. 10), how should He not also, with reference to His own whom He desires no longer to call servants but friends, speak of commandments in the keeping of which they must prove their love to Him as friends? (xv. 9, 10, xiv. 15). If the evangelist does not more definitely adduce these commandments of Jesus, which are abundantly given by the Synoptics, it is because he knows that his readers are in possession of the Sermon on the Mount and similar records, and he has no wish to repeat to them that with which they are familiar. The *τηρεῖν* of His ἐντολαῖ, the *τηρεῖν* or *φυλάσσειν τὸν λόγον μου* of which he makes Jesus repeatedly speak (viii. 51, xii. 47, xiv. 13), cannot be otherwise understood than as pointing back to all that, according to the Synoptics, He commanded them (Matt. xxviii. 19). The one commandment whose contents he quotes, the commandment of brotherly love (xiii. 34), notwithstanding its limitation to the community of disciples, reminds us of how, according to the Synoptics, He traced back the whole law to the double commandment of love. And here it is love itself that enjoins love; Jesus can comprehend His whole doctrine in the terse exhortation: "Abide in My love" (xv. 9). Moreover, the evangelical and not legal character of His injunction stands out in two details. In the first place, His gracious example exciting to imitation is united—as also in the synoptic phrase, Matt. xi. 29—with the commandment: "I have given you an example, that ye should do to one another as I have done to you" (xiii. 15). In the second place, He promises to them, for the fulfilling of His commandments, the continuous help and discipline of His heavenly Father: "Every branch in Me that bringeth forth fruit, the Father—as the true vinedresser—will purge, that it may bring forth more fruit (xv. 1, 2).

## § 2. THE GOSPEL COMMUNITY

The most important commandment of the departing Master to His own (xiii. 34) presupposes a peculiar community of them in the world after His departure, which He describes in

the Synoptics as His *ἐκκλησία*; the expression is unknown to the Johannine sayings, but not the thing. In the prediction of the temple, which the Jews will destroy but which He will restore (ii. 19), we have already the indication of a new community of God on earth, which through Him is to come forth from the ruins of the community of the Old Testament. And the words to the Samaritan woman regarding the worship of God which is about to commence "in spirit and in truth," that is, in inwardness and the perfect revelation of God, serve to explain the hint of the former passage, and lead us to think of a community of "true worshippers" (iv. 21 f.). But it is in keeping with the inwardness and ideality of Jesus as well as of His evangelist that they do not advance from that to a visible order of the community and its worship, but leave all such things to the Spirit, who is to tell the disciples later on all that they would not be able to bear as yet (xvi. 12, 13). Even baptism and the Supper, though John knew that they were already practised in the Church, are not mentioned as external ordinances, but only the ideas of them are expressed (iii. 3-5, vi. 35 ff.). The Johannine Christ in the same way is satisfied with expressing the idea of His undivided Church, without entering into its actual conditions. This idea is contained in the image of the flock which Jesus repeatedly uses in the tenth chapter, and has also used in the same sense in Luke xii. 32. This ideal image makes no distinction between discipleship as it is before His death and as it will be after His death. The lamb, the creature entirely ruled by the sense of dependence, yielding in every way to its shepherd, is the fitting symbol of the believer, and therefore the flock of lambs is the emblem of the ideal community. This community of believers, during the lifetime of Jesus, consists only of lambs from the fold of Israel; but "He has other sheep which are not of this fold," the children of God scattered in the heathen world (xi. 52), them—in His future glorified activity—He must also bring, that there may be one flock and one Shepherd in humanity (x. 16). The nature of this community of God, to be composed of Jews and Gentiles, will consist in their becoming one with Him, and through Him one with the Father, and in the same way one also with each other: "I pray not for them only" (My present disciples), it

is said in the intercessory prayer, "but for those also who shall believe in Me through their word ; that they all may be one ; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us : that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." The community of believers is thus characterised, first by the relation which they have to Him and through Him to the Father, and then, resting on this, by their relation to each other. The relation to Him is that of the most inward and indestructible communion : "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me : and I give unto them eternal life ; they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand" (x. 27, 28). At the same time, they are in the Almighty Father's hand (x. 29, 30) : for "I and the Father are one." The Father Himself loveth them, and with the Son has made His abode in them, through His Holy Spirit (xiv. 23) ; and He rules, at the same time, over them with that fatherly love and faithfulness of which it is said in the synoptic testimony, "The very hairs of your head are all numbered," with the love and faithfulness which the departing Saviour commended them in the words, "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (xvii. 15 ; cf. Matt. vi. 13). On their side the child relation in which they stand to the Father through Him is expressed above all in "prayer in the name of Jesus," and they are declared children indeed when their prayer is heard (xiv. 14, xvi. 23, 24). What Jesus says of this new mode of prayer in His name, reminds us of the prayer of the Church in Matt. xviii. 19, which is also characterised in ver. 20 as "prayer in the name of Jesus" ; yet we have no right to limit the various invitations and promises to public prayer. All the synoptic exhortations and promises with regard to prayer are summarised here, and at the same time it is explained how they are sure of being heard. To "pray in the name of Jesus," that is, to plead the relationship to God in which they stand through Jesus, can only be truly done by believers when they pray for what He, were He still visibly among them, would ask for them ; therefore when their prayers spring from communion with Him, from His mind and spirit, they cannot fail to be in agreement with the heavenly Father's thoughts of love, and are therefore certain

to be heard. This enables us to understand how—amid the anxiety of the world—the peace of Jesus, and the perfect joyousness (*χαρά*) which He was at all times able to maintain in this world, in virtue of His unbroken communion with the Father, can and will dwell also in the circle of His disciples (xvi. 24, xvii. 13, 14, 27). The relation in which Jesus places His disciples to each other, corresponds with this relation to Him and to the Father : “ A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another ; as I have loved you ” (xiii. 34, xv. 17). A new commandment—for whatever the Old Testament preached about love for our neighbour, a love such as He bore to His own, the love which lays down its life for its friends, was something completely new in the world. Here is comprehended in one great saying what is set forth in the Synoptics in the sayings : “ One is your Father ; One is your Master, and all ye are brethren. Who among you will be great, let him be the servant of all : even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, etc. ; and the feet-washing (xiii. 3–17) is added as an expressive illustration of this last idea of a brotherly love which renders self-denying service, and thus grows better and purer.

### § 3. RELATION OF THE DISCIPLES TO THE WORLD

But Jesus also foretells the future relation of His community of disciples to the world. As, in His synoptic discourses, He prepares them first of all for the hatred to be expected from the world, the suffering and persecution they will have to experience for His sake : “ If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world ” (that is, had the character of men of the world) “ the world would love its own : but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the words which I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. They will put you out of the synagogue : yea, the time will come, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have neither known the Father nor Me ” (xv. 18–20, xvi. 1–3). In contrast with that He points them to the superior power of God which

shall be in them, and to the great task which devolves upon them in virtue of that power, in this world estranged from God and filled with hatred. The Spirit of the Father and the Son, ruling in the disciples, must through them bear testimony to the world regarding Christ (xv. 26),—a testimony that will reprove, that is, convict (*ἐλέγχειν*), the world of its sin, of His righteousness, and of the judgment corresponding to both (xvi. 18). That is to say, the Holy Spirit, who witnesses through the disciples, is to convince the world of the sin which consists in its unbelief in Jesus; of the righteousness in which He has been manifested who was rejected as an evil-doer, but is now exalted to the Father, having passed into the invisible world; and of the judgment which has been executed once for all on the spirit of this world by His appearance and death, and which for that reason will ultimately be completely accomplished on the world also (xvi. 9–11).<sup>1</sup> It is evident that an operation of the Spirit which aims at conversion and deliverance is meant by this *ἐλέγχειν*, that is, the testimony convinces the heart, and so this saying forms the transition to that which Jesus charged His disciples concerning their mission for the world. The community of disciples is indeed the bearer of that Spirit which is to convince the world; it has to serve as His organ in a twofold way, direct and indirect. Indirectly, by convincing the world of the truth of the gospel through the spirit of harmony and self-denying love that rules in it, that is, through the preaching of good works as enjoined in Matt. v. 16, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye love one another"; and "(I pray) that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me" (xiii. 35, xvii. 21). The more the spirit of hatred rules in the world, the more powerfully must the loving fellowship of believers testify to the divinity of their cause. But a direct mission must also be exercised in the world through the testimony of the word (xvii. 20, xv. 27); and in this appears the significance of the apostolic office, on which

<sup>1</sup> We have endeavoured to paraphrase these obscure words with the view of explaining them. The manifest original reference to the Jewish people guarantees their genuineness; for the Spirit could only, in the first place, convict the Jewish people of their sin and unbelief, since to them alone salvation had hitherto been offered in vain.

and on His call of them to it Jesus repeatedly lays stress (vi. 70, xv. 16). When in xv. 26, 27, He says : "The Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, will testify of Me ; and ye also shall bear witness, since you have been with me from the beginning," He does not mean by the testimony of the Spirit one which is not mediated through believers, or by the testimony of the disciples, one in which the Spirit would have no share. But He does distinguish the spiritual testimony which may be given by all believers through word and work, from the historical testimony which rests upon the eye-witness of His apostles. He had chosen them in order that they might be the personal witnesses to His earthly life, and had ordained them to bring forth much fruit after His departure (xv. 16). He had even prepared them in a certain sense to accomplish greater things than Himself on earth—viz. in immediate results (xiv. 12). But there is nothing to indicate that He had conferred on them the commission to preach in anyway of privilege beyond His other and later disciples. There is nowhere any mention of an establishing of offices with a view to their transmission ; even the words "feed my lambs," which the Risen One addressed to Peter (xxi. 16 f.), are simply the commission to the most masculine and mature among the Twelve to interest himself in his weaker companions (cf. Luke xxii. 32). And therefore there is not the slightest reason for finding in the breathing of the Spirit (xx. 22, 23), and the authority united with it, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained," anything else than a communication of authority which is to pass over from these first disciples to the whole future Church. If the intention here had been to establish an official authority in or over the Church, there would surely have been arrangements for an official succession too. But, as in the farewell discourse and elsewhere, the Holy Spirit is promised equally to every believer, to everyone who thirsts for Him (vii. 37-39) ; so also in this passage, which manifestly refers to those promises, it is the authority of the whole Church of disciples derived from the communication of the Spirit which is decisive. The remission or retaining of sins there, is nothing else than the twofold influence which the spiritual testimony of the Church exercises on the sinful

world. This spiritual testimony will relieve of their guilt those who repent by leading them to faith, but will only bind the burden of their sins on those who harden themselves in unbelief, and make their guilt permanent.<sup>1</sup> In all these features, accordingly, we find no trace of those Church ideas which moved the second century, but rather the same Church ideas which we met with in the synoptic sayings.

#### § 4. THE JUDGMENT OF THE WORLD

Finally, as to the questions about the completion of salvation, the judgment of the world, and the resurrection of the dead, the distinction between the synoptic and Johannine testimony consists, above all, in this, that what is future in the Synoptics is emphatically brought into the present in John. It is true that, as was remarked before, the idea of the parousia of Jesus lies also at the basis of the Johannine farewell discourse; but while the parousia in the Synoptics, under the pressure of the primitive tendency to lay all stress on the future, is interpreted always in an eschatological sense, and its real sense of "henceforth" (*ἀπ' ἦρτι, ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν*) only once appears in the farewell discourses in John; on the other hand, the eschatological element is expressed only once in the passage xiv. 3 (*πάλιν ἔρχομαι καὶ παραλήμφομαι ὑμᾶς πρὸς ἐπαντόν, ἵνα δπου εἰμὶ ἐγὼ καὶ ὑμεῖς ἥτε*);<sup>2</sup> in the other passages the second coming is virtually equivalent to the facts of Easter and Pentecost, which the prophetic view unites in one. The treatment of the idea of the judgment of the world in the Johannine sayings is of a corresponding nature; it is repeatedly assigned to the future, but still more frequently and emphatically it is asserted as (in principle) already in operation. The notion of *κρίσις*, or *κρίμα*, of *κρίνειν*, is so variously applied in our Gospel that there is room for the

<sup>1</sup> Weisse, *N. T. Theol.* ii. 404, applies this authority rather to the distinction of mortal and venial sins in the discipline of the Church. An explanation which is connected with his (antiquated) conception of the binding and loosing in Matt. xviii., and for which no kind of support can be found in John's Gospel, which nowhere treats of church discipline.

<sup>2</sup> Besides this we need only refer to the passage in the Appendix, chap. xxi. 22, which speaks of His return in quite a synoptic way.

strongest apparent contradiction. At one time Jesus declares that He judgeth no man, that He has not come to judge; and immediately thereafter He says that He does judge, and that all judgment is delivered unto Him; and He asserts the same contradiction of His Father (cf., for example, v. 22 with viii. 50). Of itself *κρίνειν*, *κρίσις*, signifies a judgment or moral decision which need not be one of condemnation, and therefore it may be taken in the ordinary sense of dispensing justice, as vii. 24: "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." In the same sense Jesus can at one time decline it, for He condemns no man without love (viii. 15; cf. Matt. vii. 1); at another time and in the same breath He can maintain it, in so far as He has certainly many things to judge concerning His people, that is, He must deliver manifold moral judgments (viii. 16, 26). On the other hand, where the *κρίσις* or the *κρίνειν* comes into question as a peculiar Messianic duty, the idea certainly approximates to that of condemning, inasmuch as those who believe and are being saved are exempted from it (iii. 18, v. 24); it really then signifies an effective sentence, as when "the prince of this world" is described as judged (xvi. 11); or it means bringing the world to a reproving consciousness of its sinful and lost condition, as contrasted with deliverance and quickening. Now in this sense Jesus seems at first desirous of rejecting the Messianic office of judging the world: "God sent not His Son to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (iii. 17; cf. xii. 47). But that only asserts the essential aim of His mission; from the threats of judgment in the preaching of the Baptist (Matt. iii. 10-12), it might appear as though the judgment of the world was the essential aim of the Messianic mission, while it is really grace, forgiveness, deliverance; that is what Jesus desires to settle in presence of Nicodemus. But at the same time He does not conceal that judgment is inseparable from the Messianic work, that it is the unavoidable other side of His saving activity: "Whosoever believeth in Him is not condemned; whosoever believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only deliverer. This is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light"

(iii. 18. 19). As in Jesus, the light of the world, the pure manifestation of the eternal truth and goodness, the hearts of men are made manifest, as one class of men, in particular, consciously decide against the light and in favour of the darkness, He who came not to condemn but to save the world, causes the self-judgment of those who despise Him. In the same sense Jesus says (ix. 39), after the healing and conversion of the man born blind, "For judgment am I come into the world, that they who see not might see, and they who see might become blind"; that is, that the spiritually blind, the ignorant, might know the truth through me, but the wise and prudent might close their eyes to it. If the appearing of the Son of God already accomplishes a silent judgment of the world, how much more His death; xii. 31: *νῦν κρίσις ἐστίν τοῦ κόσμου τούτου νῦν ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου ἐκβληθήσεται ἔξω.* The perfect judgment of the actual condition of the world is, that it had nothing else for the Son of God than the Cross; in its murderous hatred against the Prince of truth and love, the world is judged, convicted of its lost and guilty condition as at no other point of its history. And yet, at this very point the idea of the *κρίσις* has almost the significance of a crisis for recovery, for life; for Jesus continues: "Now is the prince of this world cast out, that is, the world-ruling spirit of deceit and hatred hurled from his throne; and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." Accordingly, the judgment of the world is notably here a moral judgment, which cannot and is not meant to lead to eternal condemnation, but to eternal salvation. But this judgment of the world, which has already taken place, does not exclude the future final judgment, but demands it. For now the light which has come into the world, and proved victorious in conflict with the darkness, pervades humanity and the history of the world, and puts everyone in the position of letting himself be lightened by it, or of closing his eyes against it. And the final result of this enlightening or refusing in presence of the light must at last appear, and determine the eternal worth or worthlessness of each man's life. And so the Johannine Christ certainly keeps in view a final judgment, a judgment at the last day. Just as in the synoptic sayings,

He knows that this judgment is delivered to Him as the Son of Man : "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son : that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father" (v. 22). "He hath given to the Son to have life in Himself, and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man" (vv. 26, 27). "The hour cometh, when all that are in their graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good, to the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of condemnation" (vv. 28, 29 ; cf. with respect to the last day, vi. 39, 40, 44, 54, xii. 48). Here, therefore, we have the idea of a universal final judgment of all who are in their graves ; but only the wicked are affected by the judgment (*ἀνδράς κρίσεως*)—those who have done good are not judged, that is, condemned, but are called to everlasting life. The judgment takes place according to works or deeds, that is, according to the moral outcome of the life ; and yet faith is not a matter of indifference, for whosoever believeth, it is said, is not condemned (iii. 18). The certain presupposition here is, that believers, as those who have surrendered themselves to the eternal light, prove also to be the doers of good ; unbelievers, as those who have closed themselves against the light, will be and remain the doers of evil (cf. iii. 19, 21). It remains to be noticed above all that here also the Son exercises judgment. "The Father judges no man," the eternal love condemns no man because he is a sinner ; strictly speaking, it does not condemn any, but leaves it for men to judge themselves by their rejection of the offered Saviour. The Son of Man is the Judge of the world, just because He offers eternal life, the kingdom of heaven, to all, compels them all to a final decision, and condemns those who continue in unbelief. But even He can say that He judgeth not, that is, condemns not ; but "whosoever despiseth Me, and receiveth not My word, hath already his judge : the word that I have spoken will judge him at the last day" (xii. 48). The whole depth and spirituality of the idea of the judgment lies in this declaration ; the rejected truth, the rejected gospel of salvation, becomes the sword that shall pierce the soul. That no man, accordingly, shall be finally condemned to whom this word—either in this world or the next—has

not been impressively presented, is manifest; and even the idea that the Son of Man, the Saviour of the world, is to be the only executor of the divine judgment, leads, as we have seen already, to the same result. "He," it is said (v. 30), "does nothing of Himself: as He hears (from the Father) He judgeth; for He seeketh not His own will, but that of Him who sent Him." "But this is the will of Him who sent Him, that of all who are given unto Him He should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day" (vi. 39; cf. Matt. xviii. 14). The Son therefore proceeds in the judgment according to this loving will of the Father; that is a guarantee, that however much He may have to condemn in men, the aim of His judgment will be, that nothing capable of being saved will be lost.

### § 5. THE RESURRECTION AND ETERNAL LIFE

Besides the judgment of the world, there emerges, as we have already seen in the idea of the completion of salvation, the idea of the raising of the dead. It appears in v. 28, 29 in closest connection with the idea of judgment, and there is assumed a double resurrection, an ἀνάστασις ζωῆς and an ἀνάστασις κρίσεως. That corresponds to the view given in Dan. xii. 2, which was the prevailing view among the Jews; but it does not correspond to the view of Jesus which we found in the Synoptics, according to which there is but one ἀνάστασις τῶν δικαίων. On closer examination we find that this passage stands alone even in John. Wherever else mention is made of ἀνάστασις it is united with the ζωή, the eternal, blessed life,—"I am the resurrection and the life,"—and the being raised at the last day is repeatedly and directly co-ordinated with having eternal life, and is opposed to being lost (vi. 39, 40, 54); that is, resurrection relates solely to believers, who are just the righteous. Consequently, the passage v. 29 does not attest Jesus' real view of the resurrection. Possibly the popular expression, which is connected with the notion of a coming forth of the departed from their graves (ver. 28), is to be put solely to the account of the evangelist, and, at anyrate, it expresses nothing else than the idea of a possibly twofold close of the course of human life;

besides those who attain the eternal goal, there are those who come short of it, and are lost (iii. 16, vi. 39), as is also indicated in the Parable of the Vine and the Branches by the cutting off and burning of the unfruitful branch (xv. 6). In all other passages the idea which we find in the synoptic sayings, that the resurrection is the completion of life, stands out with increased clearness. Not only is it that here—as in the controversy with the Sadducees—Jesus frequently turns from the idea of the resurrection to that of the true life, of living unto God (Luke xx. 38), but He also brings the resurrection and the *ζωὴ αἰώνιος* into this life. “He that heareth my words, and believeth on Him that sent Me,” it is said (v. 24), “hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death to life” (*μεταβέβηκεν*); and in like manner the great saying (xi. 25, 26), “He that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live,” is, as it were, surpassed by a greater, which regards the death of the body as of no importance, “And he that liveth and believeth in Me shall never die” (cf. vi. 50, 51, x. 28). Now, if the real inner resurrection is that which is described in the passage v. 24, 25, when the spiritual dead hear the voice of the Son of God, and are wakened by it into life, the hour in which a man in this present life lays hold of and receives the eternal, then what else can the future resurrection of life (which in the same context, ver. 28, points back to this) be, than the complete development of the true life already begun here, the manifestation in glory of the life hid with Christ in God? (Col. iii. 4). But the inferences which we were forced to draw from the synoptic testimony obtrude themselves also in the Johannine: Jesus cannot possibly have supposed after the bodily death of those who through Him “have passed from death to life” an empty time of expectation, to be filled up perchance by a sleep of the soul till the resurrection at the last day, a time of expectation that is longest for those who first became partakers of eternal life on earth; on the contrary, as in His own case the day of resurrection came on the second morning, so in the case of each of His own the resurrection morning will be nothing else than the attainment of inner perfection. It is true that here the constant union of the resurrection with the

*έσχατὴ ημέρα* (vi. 39, 40, 54) seems to stand in the way of this idea; but is it not as though Jesus Himself would teach us to break through this mechanical form of the notion when He answers Martha's utterance, "I know that my brother will rise at the last day," with the words, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live"? (xi. 24, 25). That means at least, the resurrection does not depend on the last day, but on Me, and communion with My life. The last day is in John also—as we have proved already in the synoptic teaching—only the inadequate symbol for that which comes to all, the final and deliberate issue of the life's history, the ultimate result which God will some day draw from every life, and consequently from the whole course of the world; the particular day is only a pictorial form. Still less according to John than in the case of the Synoptics does Jesus enter into a painting of the future eternal life. Once in John, oftener in the Synoptics, there is mention of a reward; in both cases, indeed, with reference to those who sow and those who reap, that is, to Himself and His disciples; the picture of the common joy of harvest stands beside both (iv. 36). Again, Jesus speaks of the Father's house of many mansions whither He goes before in order to prepare for them a place, and then to fetch them home (xiv. 2–4); an idea which reminds us of Matt. xxiv. 31, 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17, but is immediately spiritualised by what follows, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (ver. 6); that is to say, from heaven He through His Spirit will draw His own after Him into the eternal world of perfection. But the inmost, and at the same time simplest human expression of what He has to guarantee to His own as the contents of eternal life, is contained in the words of the intercessory prayer: "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, the glory which Thou hast given Me" (xvii. 24); and that beholding is certainly conceived in ver. 22 also as a joint possession.

## BOOK III

### VIEWS OF THE FIRST APOSTLES

#### I. *THE FIRST APOSTLES AND THE FIRST COMMUNITY, ACCORDING TO THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES*



### CHAPTER I

#### THE STANDPOINT OF THE FIRST APOSTLES

##### § 1. CREDIBILITY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

APART from particular suggestions and inferences which we may gather from the Gospels and Epistles, we have no other account of the mode of thought, experiences, and activity of the disciples of Jesus, immediately after the departure of their Master, than that of the Acts of the Apostles. And this report has recently been contested by the critical school in very much the same way as the Gospels, and degraded into a pretty late collection of legends. It is true that the conception of the Acts of the Apostles as a work written with a view to mediation, to reconcile Peter with Paul, and Paul with Peter, along with the whole view of Baur of primitive Church history, has recently been much questioned even within the critical school; but its place has been taken by a general scepticism, extending even to those parts of the book that are not involved in this theory. It is difficult to contend with this mood and method, as it does not take its rise in historical and critical reasons, so much as in the modern repugnance to everything supernatural in the beginning of Christianity, and it exchanges

historical criticism for utter doubt of all tradition, and opens the way for subjective inventions as more worthy of confidence. A thoughtful criticism, not entangled in these errors, will find in the Acts of the Apostles—even in the earlier Petrine part, which is here to be considered—just as firm historical ground as in the Gospels. It may be granted to that criticism, that the earliest Church historian who speaks here does not fulfil all our modern claims, that the sources he apparently made use of were defective and unequal, that he lacked the full keenness of historical investigation as well as the power of characterisation. Misconceptions and legendary deposits here and there are clearly discernible, and, in particular, a thin veil of legendary embellishing already hung over the narrative of the origin and development of the primitive Church in Palestine, which forms the basis of the first twelve chapters. But through this veil the facts still shine with such vividness and uniqueness, that we can determine the real state of things in all its essential features. How faithfully the book has preserved the conditions of antiquity is attested by the one notable example, that it has nowhere put the trinitarian baptismal formula already current at the time in which Matthew's Gospel was written (Matt. xxviii. 19) in the place of the more simple and original "in the name of Jesus." It is a good proof of the credibility of the Acts of the Apostles, that as regards its doctrinal contents it represents the primitive apostolic mode of thought, feature by feature, just as we should have expected to find it from the general conditions of that first period, viz. in the twofold aspect of a life entirely Christian in its contents, and yet entirely Jewish in the forms of its doctrine and customs.

#### § 2. STANDPOINT OF THE DISCIPLES DURING THE LIFETIME OF JESUS

It has been said that the apostles were still true Jews except in the one point, that they no longer expected the Messiah from the future, but believed that He had appeared in Jesus of Nazareth. Rightly understood, that is perfectly correct; they were Jews as before, except in the one point that made the Jew a Christian. As is represented in Matt. xvi.

13 f. they had recognised the Messiah in Jesus at a time when their people as a whole were in error as to His Messiahship ; they had recognised Him as such, not because flesh and blood had disclosed it, but because the Father in heaven had revealed it to them, that is, in virtue of an inner experience which laid in their hearts the foundation of a new life. This inner experience had enabled them to look beyond the fact that Jesus had not fulfilled the popular Messianic expectations such as even they had received from the prophets and cherished ; the personal impression which they received from Jesus, and the fruit of this impression in their hearts, were stronger than the contradiction between His ministry and all the Messianic notions in which they had been educated (cf. John vi. 66-69). And thus, under cover of their old Jewish way of thinking, a new life sprang up in them which He had begotten in them, the sense of communion with God, and sonship which raised them far above the old Jewish relation to God. But that cover still existed, a tissue of all that had been true and sacred to them from their childhood. Although their souls tasted the freedom of the children of God (Mark ii. 19), yet as a matter of course they maintained their walk as pious Israelites in all the commandments and traditions of the law, both written and unwritten. Moreover, after as before, they occupied the old Jewish standpoint even in their understanding of Messianic prophecy ; they clung to the expectation of a visible Messianic kingdom, part of heaven part of earth, which was to establish a theocracy over all the world with Israel as centre. The Messiah they believed had come in Jesus, but not the Messianic kingdom : only they expected day by day that their Master would set it up (Luke xix. 11 ; Acts i. 6). This whole contradiction between their inner Christian life, which resembled a swelling bud, and their Jewish notions, which enclosed this bud like a rigid sheath, was only possible because they did not yet really understand Jesus' doctrine of the kingdom of heaven. For we can conceive the knowledge of the disciples during the lifetime of Jesus only as like a child's learning who takes in the words with a dim sense of their meaning, but can only fully understand the lesson at a later and maturer age (cf. John xiv. 5, 8, 22, xvi. 12-15).

### § 3. IMPRESSION OF THE DEATH AND THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

In this inner condition they are startled by their Master's terrible death. No clearer ray of light could fall on their manner of thought at that time than the words of the disciples on the way to Emmaus. "He was a prophet mighty in word and deed before God and all the people: our chief priests and rulers have delivered Him to death. But we thought it had been He who should have redeemed Israel" (Luke xxiv. 19, 20). They looked upon His whole past life and work, not as that of the Messiah, but as that of a prophet, and so it really was in its form; but they had believed that under this prophetic mantle the Messiah was concealed, and that some day He would exchange it for the king's mantle, and that on that day all that Israel had longed to see and possess would be realised. This hope was now destroyed, annihilated by the fearful guilt of their people and rulers. It certainly was not yet completely extinguished in their hearts. There continued in their hearts a love for Him, and with it a belief in Him also; their inner relation to Him, even without the resurrection, might not have given them anything to preach, but it would have remained. They would have clung to His promise of returning, which would now first have truly come to life in them; and loving hope rooting itself in that, would have accompanied them through life. But that would not have been a victorious hope, a hope so energetic as to impel them to joyous activity; their life would have been passed in unfruitful longing and idle waiting, which would have gradually become more faint through hope deferred. The miracle of the resurrection preserved them from this stunting of their inner life, which at the same time would have frustrated all the wider results of Jesus' life for which they hoped, but it did not change their general view. It is wasted effort trying to explain the resurrection on purely subjective, psychological, or pathological grounds. Only as a truly objective supernatural event does it take its place in the historical and psychological conditions of the time.<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> I may be allowed to express this briefly and tersely here after having repeatedly entered upon the minute proof of it, cf. my arguments against Holsten in the *Stud. und Krit.* 1870, 1871, and in my *Leben Jesu*, vol. i;

resurrection of Jesus, as well as the death of the Messiah, broke through the disciples' Jewish view of the world, in which there was no resurrection to a glorified immortal life before the last day ; it cannot therefore have been a product of their own mind ; and though for that very reason it revived their Messianic expectations, it did not by any means satisfy them or radically remodel them. They did not from that moment transfer their hopes to another higher world, to which notwithstanding His reappearance at the resurrection it was clear He henceforth belonged, but they continued to look for a return which should give Him back entirely to the earth and to His Church upon it, and so bring about the expected Messianic kingdom on the earth. His assumption into heaven, prepared for by the resurrection, appeared to them as but a brief delay which, unforeseen in their original expectations, was to be referred solely to the guilt of the people. We may even perceive that the disciples in the days immediately after the resurrection were employed in finding reason in Scripture for the course which events had taken, so unlike anything in their original expectations ; they were searching through the Old Testament with the view of discovering that "the Messiah must suffer such things, and enter into His glory" (Luke xxiv. 26, 27, 44-46 ; Acts ii. 25-28, 34, 35). To them, therefore, nothing

also the two works by Steude, *Die Visions hypothese in ihrer neuesten Vertretung*, and *Die Vertheidigung der Auferstehung Christi* (both 1887). With reference to this, it seems to be the desire of the most recent and only scientific method, not to refute but to ignore such investigations and proofs, and to find some detail in the New Testament tradition which may serve as the starting-point for a thin woven and imaginative construction of history which gets rid of the miracle of the resurrection. Such a starting-point is given in *προάξει ὡμᾶς; εἰς Γαλιλαίαν,* Mark xiv. 28 ; Matt. xxvi. 32, wherein it is supposed we have the evidence of that flight on Good Friday which is attributed to the disciples, that far from the grave of Joseph of Arimathea, and under the power of old impressions in Galilee, they may dream of a resurrection of their Master. Criticism, otherwise so sharp sighted, does not see that thus itself passes into vision. For if the genuine kernel of the evangelic tradition is that He went before them into Galilee, then it was only after this period that they followed into Galilee Him who rose on the third day ; and so the flight on the very night of the betrayal which is charged against them loses its last apparent support, and must positively be dismissed. See this more in detail in the recent third edition of my *Leben Jesu*.

is yet fulfilled by the resurrection of Jesus; only they have received an imperishable pledge that He lives and is exalted above all the malice of His foes, and that He can be near to them though they do not see Him; and certainly through this experience their inner relation to Him must have been very greatly strengthened, and themselves made fit for giving heroic effect to it in a hostile world.

#### § 4. THE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT

A new experience which followed naturally on the event of Easter gave the immediate impulse to this. The wonderful experiences of Easter Day had their issue in a festival of their little community which made them altogether certain of their new connection with their glorified Master, a connection no longer visible, but all the more spiritual and inward. The new spiritual life which He breathed into them had glowed higher and hotter since Easter, and the hour must come when it would burst into flame. The Pentecost narrative of the Acts of the Apostles is simply the witness by one who only half understood it to a fact which, psychologically, is quite intelligible. At a time when the national festival of Pentecost had gathered them together, under the influence of their reflections on what they had seen at Easter, there appeared amongst them prophetic gifts, and even ecstatic conditions, in which they joyfully discovered the fulfilment of the promise of the Risen One to endow them with His Spirit. Those gifts of prophetic inspiration and ecstatic speech were not the Holy Spirit, which He had announced to them as the indwelling of His own glorified life. This Spirit, that is, the power of His own holy life operative in them, had been planted in germ within them long ago, and since the mighty events of His death and resurrection, to which the evangelist John immediately attaches the communication of the Spirit (xx. 22), that power had struggled upwards within them. But as they were wont, after the manner of the Old Testament, to regard the prophetic gifts as the supreme evidence of the Spirit, those phenomena were signs and pledges to them of that Spirit (Acts ii. 17 f.), and so they felt themselves from that hour endowed with power from on high,

and produced thereby on that day greater results than ever Jesus Himself had obtained. Besides, this new miraculous event seemed to belong to their Jewish Messianic trains of thought. The prophets had predicted that the Messianic time should be announced, and the Messianic kingdom begin, with a universalising of God's prophetic gifts and an outpouring of His Spirit upon all flesh (Joel iii. 1-5; Acts ii. 17-21). Jesus, exalted to the right hand of God had now exercised the first act of His sovereignty, and sent down from heaven His first gift; in it they had the earnest of that fulfilment of all that the prophets had spoken, which should continuously make progress and could not be arrested. The view of the original apostles is thus throughout composed of two dissimilar elements; new and transcendent experiences are conceived by them in Old Testament forms, but these give only an elementary understanding of the experiences. The limits which this imposed upon their knowledge are made very apparent in two respects especially: in the preponderance of the parousia idea, and in the correspondingly imperfect appreciation of the death upon the cross. Whilst the forces that were destined to renew the world's history were stirring in them, they thought that the end of time had come. Because, from the first, they had regarded the Messianic kingdom of glory as the real revelation of God's salvation, everything which they saw to be great was subordinated by them to this goal of their desire; everything is viewed in relation to this main fact, either as a preparation or a hindrance, and in their opinion these things cannot be long delayed after the Messiah has appeared. When they believed that they were already standing close beside this goal in the earthly days of Jesus, the unsusceptibility of their people and the rejection of the Messiah, which that brought about, can have appeared to them only as delaying it, and this view must have temporarily prevented them from seeing the independent greatness of the event on Golgotha as the turning-point of human history. The life of Jesus reached its completion upon the cross; in His death He overcame the world, and in that victory of His there should blossom a new life for the world; but these facts did not so much enlist their sympathy as fill them with an infinite

sorrow that Israel had rejected and trifled with her God-given Saviour. Now—they say to themselves—God has taken Him back to heaven, as the people were not worthy of Him ; but He has granted to the guilty, whose ignorance is a sort of plea (Acts iii. 17), a last time for repentance and conversion. If the people perceive this, then they trust that God will again grant Him to His people, and bring about through Him all that He has graciously promised. If they do not perceive this, but continue in their wickedness, then will the irresistible day of the Lord come to judge them ; and that day, whose anticipation lay on all earnest minds in Israel, could only be conceived by any prophet reared in Israel's ways of thought as the coming of the universal judgment of the world. This onesided view of salvation, with its longings all directed to the future, is certainly far from doing justice to the full significance of what the disciples had experienced in Jesus. It could not allow them to unfold in thought and doctrine the full meaning of that great divine event which went far beyond and even contradicted the Old Testament expectations, and so it hindered them also from exhibiting Christianity in its complete novelty and peculiarity in contrast to Judaism,—that was reserved for another, who had to be fitted for it in another way and by a different experience from the original apostles. But even for him that limited Jewish standpoint was, in the first place, not only unavoidable, but was the only one suited to his immediate task. This Jewish form and limitation brought the gospel close to the Jewish nation to which it was necessarily first offered ; through it the primitive Church was made possible, that noble shoot on the dry stump of the Old Testament Church which has been the means of blessing to the whole world. Let us now see whether from the standpoint of the original apostles (which is the only possible historical standpoint), the meagre and fragmentary communications of the Acts of the Apostles disclose a living whole.

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## CHAPTER II

## THE PREACHING OF THE ORIGINAL APOSTLES

## § 1. THE WITNESSES

The Acts of the Apostles in its earlier part reports a series of addresses and defences of Peter, a church prayer, a doctrinal discourse of the almoner Philip, and his fellow official Stephen's defence. All these fragments may be regarded as testimonies of the mode of teaching of the original apostles: though they are, of course, preserved only in the form of extracts, and to some extent have been remodelled by the historian, they exhibit a peculiarity which is certainly not that of Luke. Of these testimonies the speech of Stephen demands separate consideration, as in it a peculiar standpoint appears; all the rest may be regarded as a common experience of the views of the first disciples, whose bravest and most eloquent speaker was manifestly Peter.

## § 2. JESUS THE CHRIST

It scarcely needs to be said that the apostles after the spirit of witness was once awakened in them, had nothing more urgent to proclaim to their people than that the Jesus whom they had rejected and crucified was the Messiah. From this follows the simple fundamental Christian confession: Jesus ὁ Χριστός (ii. 38); and this confession now leads to the coining of the double name Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, a name which is seldom used in the Gospels, and could, of course, be used only by a believer in Jesus. The name Christ still continues to be used entirely as a title; ὁ Χριστὸς αὐτοῦ (*τοῦ θεοῦ*), "God's anointed," it is said iii. 18, and ἔχρισεν αὐτὸν ὁ θεός, iv. 27, x. 38. The Christology which lies at the basis of this confession and its proclamation, is the simple Christology of the synoptic Gospels; and here we have the correctness of our view confirmed, that, even in the Fourth Gospel, that is the fundamental Christology resting on Jesus' own consciousness and testimony; Christ throughout is

distinguished from God, and put in a relation of human dependence to Him. Jesus is what He is through God's will and free act. It is said in the sermon of Peter in presence of Cornelius, which is specially explicit on this point, "God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit, and with power. God through Him proclaimed peace to the people. God was with Him, so that He could heal all that were oppressed of the devil. God ordained Him to be the Judge of quick and dead" (x. 38-42). It is the same in the sermon at Pentecost; it is "God who has given Him the power to send the Holy Spirit. God hath made Him to be both Lord and Christ" (ii. 32, 33, 36). There is no expression which in anyway goes beyond the idea of a man entirely filled and moved by the Spirit of God. Some have thought to find such an expression in the title *κύριος*, which is frequently applied to Jesus in the Acts of the Apostles, and which they regard as a transference of the Old Testament name Jehovah to Jesus. But Peter in the passage (ii. 34) expresses himself quite differently about the meaning and origin of this name of homage. He borrows it from the introduction to the 110th Psalm: "Jehovah said to my (the poet-prophet's) Lord: Sit Thou at My right hand." Jesus, therefore, is not recognised as Jehovah who speaks there, but as the king addressed by Jehovah; He is "Lord" since His exaltation to the right hand of God, which is conceived as a taking possession of the Messianic throne. According to ii. 36, God has made Jesus *κύριος*, viz. by exalting Him to His right hand; if the name *κύριος* had the meaning of eternal Deity, that expression would be impossible, for to be made and by eternal nature to be are mutually exclusive terms. Neither is there a single word about the idea of pre-existence. If Jesus uttered sayings which point in that direction, as, according to the Gospel of John we must believe He did, they cannot, at anyrate, have been understood in that sense by the disciples, for the anthropocentric Christology which the disciples confess would not then be the correct one. Even the expression used in iii. 20, *τὸν προκεχειρισμένον ἡμῖν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν*, that is, "Jesus Christ who is ordained for you," contains no thought of pre-existence, as the *πρό* here has not a time but a space significance.<sup>1</sup> As to

<sup>1</sup> *πρὸς χειρός* =at hand, or ready; *προκειρίζειν*, to make ready, appoint.

the further names of this *Xριστὸς καὶ κύριος*, the Son of Man once more appears in the mouth of the dying Stephen (vii. 56, probably in allusion to Matt. xxvi. 64); but that enigmatic name of Jesus for Himself did not, as may be easily understood, pass over into the usage of the Church. It is more surprising that the Petrine part of the Acts also does not know the name "Son of God"; for the one passage which has it in the *Textus Receptus*—viii. 37—is not genuine.<sup>1</sup> The designation of God as Father is indeed used both by Jesus and by Peter in the book (i. 4, 7, ii. 33), but Jesus' corresponding name for Himself does not seem to have been in use among the disciples at the beginning. In its place, to our surprise, appears as a favourite designation for Jesus the παῖς θεοῦ, which is not to be translated child, but servant. In "the Servant of God" of Deutero-Isaiah, the primitive Church found again the clearest picture of her Lord (cf. iii. 13, 26, iv. 27, 30; Matt. xii. 17–21). And certainly the original apostles could not have proclaimed Jesus more effectively as Messiah under any other Old Testament image and name; a whole apologetic lay in this conception. If anyone took his stand upon the fact that Jesus never displayed the outward kingly glory that was expected of Messiah,—here was a scriptural designation which (according to the exposition then authoritative) altogether disregarded that outer glory, and reckoned among the very marks of God's chosen and beloved, that He would be despised of all, without form or beauty; while, on the other hand, all that made up for this apparent defect in the Servant of God, His patience and modesty, His gentle compassion, His self-sacrifice in the service of God, His character embodying the very ideal of religion, all of which is expressed in the name Servant of God, recalled most vividly to the memory of the people the picture of Jesus. The witness to His innocence and righteousness and sinlessness, which the apostles give with special emphasis, is most intimately connected with this proclamation of Jesus as the Servant of Jehovah (iii. 14, 15, iv. 27, 30). This must have been the more effective, inasmuch as while calling forth an emphatic response from the people's own conscious-

<sup>1</sup> The name ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ first appears (ix. 20) in the mouth of Paul, manifestly in the current Messianic sense.

ness, it stood in such glaring contradiction with the destiny they had prepared for the holy and righteous Servant of God. A similar service was performed by another Old Testament type, viz. that prophet, *κατ' ἔξοχην*, who was predicted in Deut. xviii. 15–19 as a fit successor of Moses, and commended to the dutiful hearing of the people under the threat of death if they disobeyed. (*The Scripture exegesis of the time*) or at least the popular belief, saw in this prophet, too, the Messiah (cf. John vi. 14); and when he presented Jesus to the people in this form, Peter not only reminded them that Jesus had appeared as a prophet, which no one denied, but at the same time he gave a reason why that appearance had so little of Messianic dignity, for here the Scriptures themselves in their predictions of Messiah spoke not of a king but a prophet. Thus the vivid presentation of the prophetic office of Jesus seems on all occasions to have formed a main element in the preaching of the original apostles, as could scarcely be otherwise in view of the fresh memory which both disciples and people had of Jesus. Even the preaching of Peter before the Roman centurion Cornelius assumes the great events of a recent past as well known to all, and sets them forth in vivid touches; the appearance of the Baptist, the preaching of Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem, His works of wonder and healing of the diseased, His shameful death with which His people had rewarded Him for all His kindness (x. 37 f.). How much more would the apostles remind their own countrymen of the signs and wonders which Jesus had done before all the people, and which they (the disciples) now were continuing in His name! (ii. 22 f., iii. 12 f.). These recollections must have cut to the heart the better and more susceptible of the people, and called on them to ponder the dreadful words of God, "He that will not hear that Prophet, that soul will be destroyed from among the people" (iii. 23).

### § 3. THE PREACHING OF THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS

Thus the apologetic preaching passes naturally into an accusation of the people of their sins, a call to them to repent. This naturally reaches its climax when it touches on the

crucifixion of Jesus. One still feels all the pain and moral indignation of the disciple when he cries to the people in his sermon, "Ye men of Israel, the man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by Him in your midst, as ye yourselves know : Him have ye taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain"; "Ye have delivered up Jesus the Servant of God, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, who was determined to let Him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired that a murderer be granted you ; and killed the Prince of Life" (ii. 22, 23, iii. 13-15). So sounds the dreadful accusation through all the sermons to the people, as well as through the answers before the Sanhedrim, down to Stephen's speech of defence. "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted ? and slain those who showed before the coming of the Just One ; of whom ye have now become the betrayers and murderers" (vii. 52). The phrase which still leaves room for repentance, "I know that ye did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers" (iii. 17), scarcely modifies in anything the severity of the condemnation. But there is nowhere mixed up with these discussions of the death upon the cross a suggestion of its having been necessary to salvation ; of its having been required as an atonement for the sins of the people, as a satisfaction to God. Some have sought to explain this silence, doubly strange to our dogmatic custom, by saying that the doctrine of the suffering Messiah was still too strange for the people;<sup>1</sup> but this wonderful attempt at explanation condemns itself. If Jesus was the Messiah, He had at any-rate, been a suffering Messiah ; this fact could not be got rid of, and if it was unintelligible to the people, or even if it gave them most grievous offence (1 Cor. i. 23), the apostles must all the more have declared it to them as necessary to salvation —if they themselves knew of such an explanation. But even in passages where everything urges them to give such an explanation, and where no conceivable hindrance stands in the way, as, for example, in the case of the conversion of the chamberlain from Ethiopia (viii. 26 f.), it is not given. The stranger reads the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, which yields the idea of the vicarious atoning sufferings as no other passage of Scripture ; he asks Philip of whom the prophet speaks, and Philip

<sup>1</sup> Thus Weiss, *N. T. Theol.* i. 177.

interprets to him the obscure writing with reference to Jesus. But in doing so there is not a single syllable of allusion to the "surely he hath borne our guilt ; the stripes were laid on Him that we might have peace." The only thing brought into prominence in the prophet's words is the innocence and patience of the sufferer, and His final exaltation. That cannot be accidental. And if we now add, that the polemic discourses of the Acts connect the forgiveness of sin with simple repentance and conversion, without any reference to the death of Jesus ; that the Epistle of James proceeds in exactly the same way, and does not use one word about the high-priestly office of Christ ; further, that the Epistle to the Hebrews, in all probability addressed to the Church at Jerusalem, presupposes an ignorance of the High-Priesthood and the sacrificial death of Jesus in this Church,—we can have no further doubt that a point which was afterwards in Pauline Christianity to be cardinal in doctrine, but which appeared only late in Jesus' own teaching, in a few prophetic indications which His disciples had never understood, had not yet dawned on the consciousness of the original apostles.<sup>1</sup> Not that the original apostles and the original Church had not words of Jesus such as Matt. xx. 28, xxvi. 28 ; every celebration of the Supper called to their remembrance the "for you," the relation of the death of Jesus to the Passover and the covenant sacrifice. But this idea manifestly had not yet entered into their doctrine of the Messiahship, so that they were not able to make any use of it in their preaching. Moreover, the impression of His suffering and death crossing their dearest hopes, was without doubt too fresh and strong to allow them to feel or think that His death could be a special source of comfort. And the whole course of the public life of Jesus which they shared with Him, and which in Jesus' own view was planned, not for defeat on the cross, but for a victory through the preaching of the gospel for the salvation of His people (Matt. xxiii. 37), seemed to entitle them to regard the violent death of the Messiah as a crossing of God's gracious

<sup>1</sup> Appeal is indeed made for the contrary to 1 Cor. xv. 3 : παρίδωκε σφιν το πάτροις, δ καὶ παρίλαβοι, ὅτι Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν ἵνα τὸν ἀμαρτίων ἡμῶν κατὰ τὰς γραψάς. But Paul with the δ καὶ παρίλαβοι was probably thinking solely of the transmission of the fact, which he then transmitted to the Corinthians with a religious interpretation taken *ex suis*.

intentions also. Yet they were not in any difficulty about reconciling this with their faith in God and salvation. Accustomed as pious Israelites to see in history an interplay of human freedom and God's rule in the world, in which God made room for men's freedom in order to reach His end by indirect means, they fancied that even this crossing of God's saving purpose was foreseen and permitted by Him; it should be met by the raising of the Crucified from death, and as they turned with this thought to their Holy Scriptures they found confirmation of it in them. That fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, in particular, said to them that it was God's counsel and will to let His righteous Servant suffer as an evil-doer and die through the sin of His people. But there also was found the words, "When He hath made His soul an offering for sin, He shall prolong His days—who shall declare His generation?" and passages of the Psalms spoke of the flesh of the righteous resting in hope, and that God would not leave His Holy One to see corruption (ii. 25 f.). All that had now to them been consolingly and gloriously fulfilled in Jesus. And so they never reminded the people of the death of Jesus without adding: all that has taken place has been according to God's determinate counsel and foreknowledge (ii. 23, iii. 18); and as it was not possible that the Holy One of God could be holden of death, your crime has been gloriously neutralised by His resurrection of which we are eye-witnesses (ii. 31, 32, iii. 15, iv. 10). The offence of the death upon the cross was thereby removed both for them and for the people, and, considering all the recollections and sense of guilt on the part of the people, it is easy to conceive what an overpowering impression must have been made by the glad, confident, and palpably true testimony: "God raised Him on the third day, and showed Him unto us. We have eaten and drunk with Him after His resurrection from the dead" (x. 40, 41). This was all the more impressive that there were now added to the testimony of the word, signs and wonders wrought by the apostles' hands which could not be denied. They pointed triumphantly to the fact that these were not the outcome of their own power or piety, but the effect of faith in Him the Crucified and Risen One to whom God gloriously bears witness by such deeds (iii. 12–16).

#### § 4. THE FUTURE AND THE PRESENT SALVATION

Now, of course, Jesus was not given back to His nation through the resurrection. He did not even appear to them ; He showed Himself only to His chosen witnesses, in order that they might proclaim Him as the Saviour and Judge chosen by God (x. 40–43). For Israel had lost Him through her sin, and should only get Him again when converted from that sin. God had taken Him back into His heaven, as if to wait to see whether the people would repent of their outrage and make themselves worthy again of their Messiah. This view, which although strange to us was quite familiar in the thoughts of the original apostles, is especially prominent in the passage iii. 19–21 : “Repent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord ; and He shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you : whom the heavens must receive until the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets in the past.” In virtue of this view, the disciples considered that in a certain measure the days of John the Baptist had returned for the people, but in a higher manner. The call to repentance was again issued in the name of the kingdom of heaven, which had come near ; but this call had increased in force, owing to the representation that the greatest sin which could be imagined had been committed in the interval, in the rejection of the Lord’s anointed. Baptism was again proffered to the people as the seal of this repentance and the pledge of the divine forgiveness, but no longer now as a mere water baptism in the name of a greater who was to come ; it was the baptism of water and of the Spirit in the name of Jesus as the Messiah who was to come again to judge the world (ii. 38, x. 42, 43). This last period of repentance and conversion, from its very nature, could only be a short one. If the original plan of God’s salvation was only interrupted by the people’s sin, if it were necessary on that account to postpone to a second advent of Messiah what, according to the prophets, the first and only advent should have accomplished, then the great day of the Lord must be at hand, before the door. With the outpouring of the Spirit, the prophet (Joel iii. 1 f.) had predicted, at the same

time, the preliminary signs of the judgment of the world, "Wonders in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke," and it was not without a reason that Peter quoted these words in the Pentecost sermon (ii. 16 f.), when he was explaining the outpouring of the Spirit from the prophecy of Joel. Israel's heaven, at least, was already overcast with blood and fire, signs of God's approaching judgment. The apostle's real preaching of salvation is thrown into relief by the dark background of this picture of the future; there is salvation (*σωτηρία*) in no other (than in Jesus), for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we are to be saved (iv. 12). The final choice was placed before their people at the last hour. If they now continued impenitent and unbelieving, their sin, which as sin of ignorance might yet find forgiveness (iii. 17, 19), would be transformed into wanton outrage, into that mortal sin to which the words applied, "The soul that will not hear that Prophet shall be destroyed from the people" (iii. 23). On the other hand, the man who submitted to conversion and baptism, believing in the name of Jesus, might be sure of the forgiveness of his sin; the name of Jesus would be imprinted on him in this baptism as the name of his Lord, who would take him as one of His own under His wings when the storm of judgment broke forth—the name which he should call upon, in the final distress, in order by it to be saved—"And it shall come to pass that whosoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved" (ii. 21). This is the full Christian proclamation of salvation, conceived, however, entirely from the Israelite view of the world and its present situation; Jesus is the only Mediator, the Founder of communion between God and man, and faith in Him, therefore, is the decisive action of the heart by which a man lays hold of his eternal salvation. The idea of *πιστεύειν εἰς αὐτόν* visibly advances in the preaching of the original apostles (iii. 16, x. 43) as the positive side of the *μετάνοια*, and neither faith nor repentance can stand alone. Salvation in the Jewish conception was essentially placed in the future, in that day of final decision when all Israel's hopes should rise like a phoenix from the flames of the world's judgment; that conception alone was possible for the apostles, though it was certainly onesided, and hindered the growth of their

knowledge. But it did not really detract from the idea of salvation as a present possession ; though it had to be perfected in the future, Jesus had preached and founded it as a present fact. Salvation was viewed as present, and was really given as present in the possession of the Holy Spirit. That Spirit was indeed infinitely more than the source of prophetic gifts ; and although the other elements were not at present comprehended as gifts of the Spirit, yet it was felt by the apostles and all believers that a higher power was operative in them than was known in Israel ; that a new nature in faith, hope, and love had come into the world in them, which every sincere man had to admit had the true child's likeness to God the Father. And they themselves, the bearers of this new nature, felt that it was so, and knew who it was who was mighty in them. They felt themselves to be the first stones of a building of God miraculously joined together, which in point of fact was the kingdom founded by Jesus, though they did not apply that name to it, but reserved it for the kingdom of glory which they expected as near at hand. They gave expression to this feeling of present salvation and to the founding of the kingdom of God already accomplished by Jesus the Christ, by triumphantly holding up to the persecuting authorities of Israel a verse of a psalm which Jesus Himself had applied prophetically to Himself : "The stone which the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner " (iv. 11). He who was rejected and shamefully killed by you, is already the pillar of a new building of God in Israel, which human hands have neither put together nor will overthrow.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE LIFE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH

##### § 1. BIBLICO-THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH

This new divine building, which Jesus had begun on earth by the preaching of His apostles, was first of all the primitive Church. Its life offers us a welcome complement

to our brief reports of the preaching of the original apostles, as no doubt it received this preaching in a much more complete state than that in which we have it. A complement also, inasmuch as in this whole primitive Christianity the life, the fulness and purity of the new nature in Christ, naturally surpasses the undeveloped doctrinal expression, and spontaneously exhibits in action principles which had not yet in anyway become objects of reflection. It is true that this Church life as soon as it begins to express its peculiar Christian character in institutions, moves, within just such forms and limits as the primitive apostles did in their preaching, viz. the limits of Jewish nationality and legality. And so the immediate expression of this Church life is important as giving a clearer reflection of the spirit and teaching of Jesus than any such deliberate expression.

### § 2. ITS POSITION IN JUDAISM

As was to be expected from the entirely Jewish origin of the Messianic movement, the primitive Church had at first no thought of separating from the Jewish commonwealth. On the contrary, the Messianic salvation was considered to be meant first and specially for the Jewish people, and the hope was kept alive of winning that people for it even as a whole. Consideration of the Gentile world is not, indeed, entirely wanting—"The promise is to you and your children," it is said in the sermon at Pentecost, "and to all who are afar off, to as many as the Lord our God shall call" (ii. 39). But these very words show that the apostles did not at first think of a mission to the Gentiles to be undertaken by them, but left it to God to devise means of bringing His salvation to the Gentile world. It was undoubtedly supposed, in virtue of Isa. lx., that the Messianic kingdom would first take shape in Israel under its Head, who should speedily return from heaven, and that the ingathering of the Gentiles to it would only then take place.<sup>1</sup> The primitive Church was then in

<sup>1</sup> An echo of this view is found in Rev. xxi. 26, xxii. 2. That the words in Matt. xxviii. 18, 19, are only a later summary of the commission of Jesus whose meaning was gradually recognised, has already been noted in connection with the trinitarian baptismal formula; it

appearance wholly within Judaism ; it was, as it is called (Acts xxiv. 14), an *aἵρεσις*, a union held together by certain views and practices, within the Jewish national and religious community, just as the Pharisees and Essenes were such *aἵρεσις* (xxvi. 5). Its members took part in the services of the Jewish temple and the Jewish synagogue (ii. 46, iii. 1, ix. 20), and there can be no doubt that they frequently took part in Jewish sacrificial ceremonies (cf. xxi. 20–24). But in the special gatherings for worship which they held in a hall of the temple, or in private houses, a different spirit prevailed than in the Jewish public worship ; in them the voices of psalms and prophets had again awakened to celebrate the praises of Jesus, the holy Servant of God, with an enthusiasm that sometimes rose to rapture (cf. iv. 24–31). And the novelty and peculiarity of the Christian system were also visibly maintained through baptism and the Supper which Jesus instituted. Through baptism (in John's form of immersion) a man separated himself from the unbelieving Israel which had crucified its Messiah, confessed Him as Lord and Saviour, and entered into fellowship with His disciples. Baptism was originally, of course, in the name of Jesus (ii. 38, viii. 16, x. 48, xix. 5), and it was only administered to adults ; all that has been read into the Acts of the Apostles about the baptism of children is pure fancy.<sup>1</sup> It presupposed as a matter of course the repentance and conversion of the baptized, and his faith in the name of Jesus as the only name in which there was salvation (ii. 38, 41). For that very reason the baptism

is here confirmed with respect to the “Go unto all the world, and teach all nations.”

<sup>1</sup> Appeal has been made to the repeated statement : “He was baptized with his whole house.” But who is to tell us that infant children belonged to [this house] ? The possibility of an apostolic baptism of children is destroyed by the reasoning of Paul (1 Cor. vii. 14), where he places the children of Christian parents on the same level with non-Christian husbands and wives, and calls them *ἅγια* because of their life connection with Christian parents, and not because of having received baptism. But still more convincing is the argument, that if there had been a tradition of apostolic baptism of children, the wavering of the Church on the subject even so late as the age of Tertullian and Augustine would have been impossible.

with water could, as a rule, be represented as a baptism of the Spirit at the same time ; those prophetic ecstatic phenomena which had made the first hundred-and-twenty at Pentecost sure of the possession of the Spirit, were as a rule repeated in the case of baptism, and marked it as baptism with the Holy Spirit. Not that the primitive Church conceived the communication of the Spirit to be inseparably connected with baptism. The Spirit comes upon Cornelius and his household before the water of baptism touches them (x. 44-48) ; and the disciples at Pentecost, so far as we know, received Him without a succeeding water baptism. On the other hand, in the case of the Samaritans whom Philip baptized (viii. 14-17), the signs of the Spirit are wanting, and only appear after the apostle's prayer and laying on of hands. But it is easy to conceive that the solemn hour of baptism, in which a profession of repentance and faith formed the crucial feature, was, as a rule, a climax of the inner life, and that the new enthusiasm of that life appeared then in those prophetic manifestations which had become the common possession of Christianity. Those who thus separated themselves from the world by the token of forgiveness of sin and the new nature in Christ, then celebrated their communion with Him and with one another in the Supper, in the breaking of bread, as it is called in the Acts of the Apostles. It was in its nature a household celebration, not observed, indeed, like the Passover by separate families, for it represented the Church itself as a family, though probably when the Church grew there had to be divisions into groups. It was an actual and regularly repeated meal, which solemnly showed forth not only their communion with the Lord, but also their brotherly love one towards another (1 Cor. x. 16, 17, xi. 20 ff.), and was therefore called later Agape (that is, love or love-feast) (Acts iv. 46; Jude 12). There was continually renewed the remembrance of that never-to-be-forgotten parting, when He gave them in this service the signs and pledges of His fellowship, continuing even after death ; and in celebrating His love, which had gone to death and beyond it, their love for one another was rekindled, which, in departing, He had urged upon them as the new commandment, and the mark of His disciples.

### § 3. BROTHERLY LOVE AND EARTHLY POSSESSIONS

One particular expression of this brotherly love has become specially celebrated, the so-called community of goods of the primitive Church. It is important, even in the interests of biblical theology, to make it clear that this was no socialistic experiment. That would have required a statutory abolition of private property and a corporate administration of the whole wealth of the community, along with the consigning of the individual earnings to a common purse, as well as a distribution of money for the daily needs of all the members; not only is there no trace of such arrangements, but the contrary is plainly set before us. The administration is the simplest imaginable: it is attended to by the twelve apostles in the midst of their other duties, on behalf of a Church of five thousand. All do not by any means receive through them their daily bread, but charity is dispensed to the widows and other helpless members (vi. 1). Private property, and still more private earnings, continue to subsist, as is testified above all by the words of Peter to Ananias (v. 4): "While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" (the money). The actual state of things at Jerusalem has been expressed by Luke in the most fitting words: "The multitude of believers were of one heart and one soul; neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common." It was a community of goods therefore not in a judicial statutory sense, but in the sense of a free, ideal brotherly love. For love's sake those who possessed real estate went and sold it, in order that no one belonging to the Church should be in want (ii. 32, iv. 34). That was a sacrifice of love which no one had commanded and which was by no means a universal rule; or how could special attention be called to such an act on the part of Barnabas? (iv. 36, 37), or how could Mary the mother of Mark, a zealous Christian, possess a house of her own in Jerusalem in which the Church met? (xii. 12). The disproportionately great number of poor people in the Church of Judea undoubtedly explains why this practice did not continue in the later apostolic Church (Matt. xi. 5; Luke vi. 20; Jas. ii. 5); and it was the

same peculiarity of circumstance in Judea which afterwards occasioned the request of the original apostles to Paul, that he would do something for the mother Church (Gal. ii. 10). Manifestly the poverty of this Church was much greater than that of the Churches which Paul founded, poor as they were. But that poverty, which was due to the rise of Christianity amongst the poor and lowly in Israel, was met from the first, on the part of the well-to-do members, with that nobleness of feeling as to earthly possessions which Jesus had communicated to His people. He had taught them to prize these as the least of all blessings, and to esteem them only as the means for laying up treasure in heaven, and for procuring friends who might welcome them into the eternal habitations.

#### § 4. THE REGULATIONS OF THE COMMUNITY

But in another notable way the idea of a brotherhood was carried out in the primitive Church,—that is, in its constitution, or rather its want of constitution, if we wish to describe accurately the earliest condition of all. For it would be a great error to imagine the apostles as its official preachers or born rulers. Certainly the apostles exercised in it great natural influence, as the familiar friends of Jesus and the founders of the Church, so that to them in the beginning was delivered not merely the word of edification, but also the administration of charity. But they had not these duties officially; and in a somewhat later period one who was not an apostle, James the brother of the Lord, enjoyed a respect which manifestly surpassed that of the apostles (Acts xv. 13; Gal. ii. 9, 11, 12). The apostles undoubtedly considered the preaching of the gospel as their real commission, and excluded from it the administration of charity (vi. 2); but even that commission to preach, whether carried out in the form of mission preaching or preaching to the Church, belongs to everyone who has the gift for it as much as to them. Stephen preaches powerfully without having been in any way ordained to it; the Almoner Philip converts Samaria and baptizes wherever he finds faith; and the fugitives from the persecution that arose about Stephen, wherever they go found churches through preaching and baptism (vi. 10, viii. 5, 12, 38, xi. 19–21).

Certainly there was not a regular order of teachers for the edifying of the Church any more than for the work of evangelism ; but it was the business of every Christian, according to the measure of his gifts, to preach the word for the edification of his brethren in their assemblies. At the outset, however, there was no ordained office at all ; but the feeling of need awakened by the growth of the Church first impelled her to change somewhat the nature of a society quite informal, which had trusted solely to the Spirit of God and love of the brethren. The informal ministering to the poor, as carried on by the apostles with their other work, proves in the long run insufficient ; and then the apostles propose that the Church should choose for herself seven men to care for the poor (vi. 1 ff.). These are not deacons, as is often said—the Book of Acts never uses this name for them, but calls them the seven even long afterwards (xxi. 8). It was a first form of official ordination which perished with the dispersion of the Church at the death of Stephen, and was not in the same form restored afterwards. The choice of the seven by the Church, and the way in which the apostles simply give counsel in the matter, shows that nothing is thought of in the office except a transference to definite officials of powers which belong to the Church as a Church. The laying-on of the apostles' hands which follows the choice of persons to care for the poor, is a recognition of the spiritual character of this office also, for which men are required who are " full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom " ; but it by no means implies a transference of apostolic official authority, to which indeed, according to vv. 2—4, care of the poor does not at all belong, but only—as we see also in the sending out of Paul and Barnabas as missionaries (xiii. 3)—the invoking of a divine blessing. When the Church is restored after the persecution, it is elders instead of those almoners who receive the gifts of love flowing in upon the Church (xi. 30), and who in other respects appear as overseers of the Church ; and so we must conclude that it was found advisable, in the readjustment of the Church, to institute real overseers with more comprehensive powers, but that these powers in relation to the Church were conceived and conferred in the same way as those of the seven. That the elders also were chosen by the Church may be concluded from the fact that, after his

detailed account in chapter vi, Luke does not find it necessary to give any account of the origin of the elder's office. The expression *χειροτονήσαντες αὐτοῖς* (= getting men elected by them) used in Acts xiv. 23, in connection with the introduction of the elder's office into the Churches of Asia Minor, favours this inference, while a choice for which Paul and Barnabas were responsible would rather lead us to expect *ἐκλεξάμενοι* (cf. 2 Cor. viii. 19); and this is confirmed by the right to choose bishops and elders which existed in the post-apostolic age of the Church. And even the introduction of this new and extended office is not intended to exclude the direct decision of the Church in important cases; the whole Church was called together for considering the great question as to what was to be imposed or not imposed on Gentile Christians (xv. 4, 22). We see then Jesus' idea of the community realised in the Church arrangements at Jerusalem; and what other arrangements would have corresponded to the universal possession of the Holy Spirit on which this Church rested?

### § 5. LEGAL OR EVANGELICAL STANDPOINT

But whilst the Church thus lives in the fulness of the Christian spirit of love and freedom, does it not make us feel that in one main point the purity of its Christian consciousness is marred by the old Judaism, namely, in seeking its righteousness with God, not in Christ but in the fulfilling of the Mosaic law? This is a question of great consequence for the understanding of the apostolic age and teaching, to which present-day theology is for the most part inclined to give an affirmative answer. We have the strongest testimony, direct and indirect, in the Book of Acts (e.g. xxi. 20) that the primitive Church held with great strictness to the observance of the Mosaic institutions; and in the later apostolic age there appeared also a Jewish-Christian party,—probably connected with the first community,—which certainly saw in the observance of these institutions its righteousness before God, or at least a necessary condition of that righteousness. We must not, however, reason backward from a later phenomena to the primitive period and Church, more especially as, after the death of Stephen, that Church was altogether scattered (viii. 1); and that Judaising

party, as we shall see, by no means affected the whole of the Jerusalem Church itself. But as regards the strict observance of the law by the primitive Church, the question still remains, Whether this observance, in the case of pious Israelites,—especially in Palestine,—which was quite natural to them, was really meant as a means of salvation and as a way of becoming just before God? There is no justification for the assumption which Baur has silently made the starting-point of his consideration of the earliest Church history, namely, that at the time of Jesus all pious Israelites were on the Pharisees' side, and hoped to merit God's favour by their keeping of the law. The piety of the Prophets and Psalms, which confidently trusted in the grace of God, who was rich in forgiveness, and not in its own righteousness, and least of all in any ritual righteousness, was not extinct in the nation from which Jesus and His disciples came forth. If we listen to the Acts of the Apostles, we find that the members of the early Church at anyrate did not seek their righteousness before God in the fulfilling of the law, but in God's grace, inasmuch as they every one became Christians on the basis of a forgiveness of sin received in baptism. And even with regard to the decision of God in the final judgment, the first apostolic confession runs to the effect, that whosoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved (Joel iii. 5; Acts ii. 21), that there is salvation in no other, "that there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved than the name of Jesus the Lord" (iv. 12). That is in direct opposition to the righteousness of the law. But if anyone is inclined to contest the genuineness of these Petrine confessions, the testimony of the contemporary who was most capable of judging in the matter refutes him: Paul, in Gal. ii. 15, 16, expressly represents to Peter that they alike had sought and found salvation in Christ, in the knowledge that righteousness before God could not be attained by the works of the law. Those Jewish Christians of course found that the name of Jesus, in which they trusted, constrained them also to follow Jesus in their conduct; and they held to the view that not to say Lord, Lord, but to do the will of God, was required for the kingdom of heaven. And this will of God they were to seek in the law, which He declared He had come not to destroy but to fulfil. But they must have viewed

and kept the law as He exhibited it to them in doctrine and life,—that is, they regarded love of God and our neighbour as the essential fulfilment of it, and the ritual commandments as only forms and customs in which God had clothed the outer life of His people. Thus the great fallacy, “the first apostolic Christians strictly observed the law, therefore they sought their righteousness before God in that observance,” melts away in every respect. The observance even of the externals of the law was certainly a matter of course for these Palestinian Christians, for without it they would have denied their nationality, despised the rules and regulations which God had given to Israel to mark it off from all other nations, and placed themselves on the level of publicans and sinners. But the old prophets had already demonstrated that one could observe these regulations with perfect piety and strictness, and indeed hold himself bound to them for God’s sake, and yet find his righteousness before God alone in love and fidelity to Him. So much may be granted to that celebrated and widely accepted fallacy, that in the early Church, and even in the first apostles, there was at first no reflection concerning this question of the law and of righteousness; Christian faith rested simply within the limits of the old order of life. The law comprehends the most outward and the most inward things. Christ had indeed made a clear distinction between the value of the two, but yet everywhere treated the outward with consideration where they did not become a hindrance to the inward. The Christians were children of Israel and lived in their mother country, where the Mosaic customs were a matter of course to all who were not foreigners or outcasts; how should they even have thought of giving themselves a reason for obeying the law? No doubt this standpoint of naive unconsciousness was not without danger in the long run. As soon as the mighty spiritual impulses of the primitive period began to be lost, when many entered the Church whose convictions were less deep, to whom Christianity was more an intellectual conviction of the Messiahship of Jesus than an experience of His renewing spiritual power, then danger arose. For, owing to that want of clearness, it was possible to think of Christianity as only a new patch on an old garment, and righteousness by faith in Christ as a complement of righteousness by the works of

the law (Gal. ii. 4 ; Acts xv. 5) ; and in fact it was with men holding such a view that Paul carried on a death-and-life struggle between Jewish bondage and evangelical freedom. But the brotherly attitude which the original apostles took up and then maintained towards Paul, shows sufficiently that their inner position from the first was not the same as that of those zealots for the law, and their position was no doubt that of the better part of the early Church.

## CHAPTER IV

## FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

## § 1. STEPHEN

Moreover, it must be noted that the strict legal standpoint of the early Church did not altogether escape contradiction. Jesus' own attitude made two courses possible. One might adhere to Christ's programme, "Not destroy, but fulfil," and might imitate His considerate accommodation of His life to the outer Mosaic institutions, content if he could put into this strict observance of the law a new spirit of inwardness and love, as Jesus had suggested in the introduction of His Sermon on the Mount. But one might also proceed on the lines of His occasional indifference to the outer institutions; and on the authority of His own prediction of the destruction of the temple, and of the future worship of God in spirit and in truth, or of His words about the new skins into which the new wine is to be put, one might come to regard that naive union of Christianity and Judaism in a temper of criticism resting upon an anticipation of a better order. It is quite credible, because based in the historical circumstances, that the latter course was taken by a Hellenist, the Almoner Stephen, as the Book of Acts records ; Hellenists, that is, those Jews who were born in lands of Greek culture, and spoke Greek as their mother tongue, formed, beside the Hebrews, that is, Hebraic- (Aramaic) speaking Jews of Palestine, a considerable part of the early Church (vi. 1 ff.). They held from the first a freer relation towards the ceremonial law,

whose observance could not be strictly carried out in Greek countries, and whose glory had to a great extent paled through distance and in presence of the seductive customs of the Greeks. The choice of the seven almoners in Jerusalem was occasioned by the grievances of Hellenists, and fell therefore chiefly on prominent men of their own circle. But Stephen, a highly gifted and fiery spirit, and likewise a man mighty in the word, surpassed all, and in him the freer mode of thought with regard to the ceremonial law now finds its prophet. He fell into a dispute with foreign Jews,—scribes, as it appears,—and the result of their defeat is an accusation before the Sanhedrim: “He ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: he teacheth that Jesus will destroy this place, and change the customs which were given to us by Moses (vi. 13, 14). If we translate these statements out of the misconception of the malicious witnesses into the meaning of the accused, that meaning will be that Stephen predicted that Jesus, in consequence of His Messianic work now begun in Israel, will set aside the temple-worship and abolish the validity of the Mosaic regulations, or, to use modern terms, that the young Christianity carried in itself as a necessary consequence the breach with the Mosaic ritual law. It is a significant anticipation of what Paul afterwards established in doctrine, and of what has been ratified by history; and as the words are an echo of the saying of Jesus about the destroying and building again of the temple, it may be supposed that Stephen, by pure insight, got to the real meaning of the words and deeds of Jesus in which He proved His inner freedom from the law. His view of the future course of religious history, expressed at first in this prophetic form, is further exhibited in the speech which he made in his defence, one of the most notable and unique fragments of the Acts of the Apostles (ch. vii.). It is to be regarded as genuine throughout. Its peculiarity defends it from every suspicion of being a fabrication of the historian, while the question whence he got the speech is easily answered. The great respect which Stephen must have enjoyed from all noble men in Jerusalem, even outside of the Church (cf. viii. 2), makes it likely that his remarkable speech was taken down immediately after his death, and preserved as a memorial of

him. And the address shows that the idea of Stephen was not merely a flash of thought, born of genius, but—as is conceivable in the case of a man disputing with scribes—a well-considered view, followed out in the history of Israel, and based on an original conception of the Old Testament.

### § 2. THE SPEECH OF STEPHEN

If we look over the speech in a merely superficial way, it seems an aimless prolix recital of the Old Testament history from Abraham to Solomon, which then somewhat abruptly takes a sharply polemical turn. On closer consideration, the polemic references are seen coming into prominence even in the historical narrative. Above all, the detailed presentation of the events between Israel and Moses is unmistakably meant to reprove the Jewish people, by presenting a picture of their conduct towards Jesus; and Jesus is expressly referred to (ver. 37) as the Prophet whom Moses predicted. “This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and deliverer. This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren:—this was He who received the lively oracles of God to give unto us,—whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust Him out from them,” etc., (vv. 35–39). The reproach of resistance to God and His revelation runs so emphatically through the speech, that the final application, “ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did,” seems prepared for from the beginning. Accordingly, a great number of expositors have regarded as the fundamental thought of the speech, that, turning from defence to accusation, it aims at holding before the people and their rulers their old inherited disobedience to God’s guidance, which they had now crowned by the crucifixion of Jesus. Well grounded as this view is, its relation to the accusation is too loose to be entirely satisfactory, and it does not sufficiently explain the various parts of the speech, especially in its earlier statements. The dwelling on the wanderings of the patriarchs; the revelations of God in the wilderness; the tabernacle which had been a source of blessing to the people for so many centuries; finally,

the breaking off of the historical consideration with the building of Solomon's temple, which is mentioned (ver. 48) without any praise, and indeed with a scarcely doubtful disapprobation;—all this points to another fundamental thought, to which other expositors give preference. Stephen was reproached with speaking blasphemous words against this holy place, by announcing its destruction. He justifies himself against that reproach by the proof that God never bound His revealing presence to this place,—that His revealing presence accompanied the people in their wanderings, from Abraham to Solomon, among foreigners, in the desert, and attested itself in the wandering tabernacle, and had been at last enclosed within these temple walls very much against God's mind. This course of thought is manifestly considered, and it comes to clearest utterance at the close in the words: "Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet. Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool: what house will ye build Me?" But the whole dispute regarding the interpretation is an idle one. The two fundamental thoughts insisted on belong to one another, and together make up the one purpose of the discourse. Stephen wishes to show that from the beginning God's revelation was free from forms, bound to no definite place and no definite ceremonies—it was spirit and life from the first; "but you have continually misjudged, denied, and drawn it down to the level of material things. Your whole history is an ever-renewed opposition between God's Spirit and your fleshly minds, and you have now crowned that opposition by the murder of the Righteous One, whom God had given you as Messiah and Redeemer." Stephen thus unites defence and assault in the most lively way, though with no other result than to seal the truth of his at once apologetic and polemic presentation of history with his blood. He has been called, not without truth, the forerunner of him who was then rejoicing in his death, namely, Paul. He resembles him not only in the open depreciation of the ceremonial law, but still more in the spiritual use to which he turns the Old Testament for the Christian criticism of Judaism. Still his method is different and unique. This tracing of an element of spirituality in worship right through the Old Testament history of revelation is rather Hellenistic than

Pauline. On the other hand, when he calls Christ the Prophet promised in Deuteronomy,—although he renders divine honours to Him in his dying invocation, as the exalted Son of Man and *κύριος*, as the future Judge of the people (vii. 59, 60),—and when He regards the crucifixion solely as a crime of the people, he shows his primitive and apostolic standpoint. Virtually his free criticism of the ceremonial law and of the connection between Judaism and Christianity is all that distinguishes him from the original apostles. In this respect, finally, there is a view to be noted which he significantly shares with Paul, and with the Epistle to the Hebrews,—the view that the Mosaic law was not given immediately by God, but by the mediation of angels (vii. 53; cf. Gal. iii. 19; Heb. ii. 2). Compared with the immediateness with which God is conceived as speaking personally to the patriarchs (vii. 3, 6), this might point to the fact that even to Stephen—as at anyrate to Paul—the law in comparison with the promise was the less immediate, that is, the less important revelation of God, and that the mediation through angels helped him to explain to himself the various external and perishable, that is, not truly divine, elements which the law contained. The sure faith with which, in dying, he saw the exalted Son of Man at the right hand of God, and the love for enemies which enabled him to pray for his murderous people (vii. 56, 60), complete the memorable picture.

### § 3. THE QUESTION REGARDING THE CONVERSION OF THE GENTILES

Undoubtedly Stephen, in his inner freedom from the limits of Judaism, had far outrun the greater part of the early Church and the first apostles themselves. But as the question of the conversion of the Gentiles gradually forced itself on the apostles, it brought to them a certain expansion of their horizon. Judaism becoming more hostile, pressed beyond its outer as well as inner limits. The appearance of Stephen had destroyed the favour which the Christian Church, faithful to the Jewish law, had at first enjoyed. The hidden gulf which separated Judaism and Christianity had become manifest, and the ruling classes had the people on their side when they pro-

ceeded to inflict on the Church the fate of its Founder. The early Church was almost wholly broken up by a systematic persecution ; numerous fugitives were dispersed in the neighbouring northern countries, and became preachers of the gospel to these countries. The evangelising of Samaria (viii. 5 f.) already formed a sort of bridge over to the mission to the Gentiles. And this began naturally with the conversion of individuals who had been proselytes to Judaism, and who of themselves inquired about the gospel. Tradition has preserved the names of two such converts, and with something of poetic embellishment it describes the conversion of a distinguished Ethiopian pilgrim by the Almoner Philip, and of the Roman Centurion, Cornelius, by Peter (viii. 26 f., x. 1 f.). This latter event, especially, is intentionally made prominent by the Acts, as the bridge which leads from the Jewish-Christian to the Gentile-Christian part, and without doubt it marked an epoch in the life of Peter. Both his history and Peter's own character make it likely that it cost him an inner struggle to accept, in opposition to the religious custom of the Jews, the invitation into a heathen house ; and it is also credible that this conflict was decided by a direction of the Spirit, an enlightenment from above in the form of a vision which revealed to him that with God there was no respect of persons, no favouring of the Jews above the Gentiles, but that out of every nation he that feareth God and doeth righteousness is welcomed by Him to His kingdom (x. 34, 35). Still there was not in these conversions of individual Gentiles any essential infringement of the Jewish character of the Church, since these individuals appeared in no other relation to the Jewish believers in Christ than that in which they formerly stood to Judaism as proselytes. But the mission occasioned by the dispersion of the first Church went further. While one part of the fugitives in Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Syria turned only to the Jews, some Cypriotes and Cyreneans—Hellenists again—broke through these limits. They began to preach also to the Greeks, that is Gentiles, and thus through them there arose in the Greek metropolis, Antioch, the first Christian Church in which Gentiles predominated, a Church in which Christianity first slipped off the garments of a Jewish sect to such an extent that there arose the name *Xpιατιανοί*, to mark a new third party beside

Jew and Gentile (xi. 20, 26); and in this Church there was also born later the idea of a great systematic mission to the Gentiles (xiii. 2 f.). The noise of this new phenomenon penetrates to the mother Church at Jerusalem, which sends Barnabas, again an Hellenist, to Antioch, in order to examine the Christianity there. He finds in it nothing to take exception to, and indeed feels himself constrained to remain for the further fostering of this development; and afterwards, with great tact, calls to his assistance the converted Paul of Tarsus. From the events described in Gal. ii. 11 f., it is evident that Barnabas had neither found existing, nor had he introduced, the observance of the Jewish ceremonial law among the Gentile Christians of Antioch, and that even the Jewish Christians there had no scruple in holding fellowship with their Gentile brethren free from the law. And this gives a certain assurance about the first community in Jerusalem, from which both the founders of the Church at Antioch and Barnabas also had come,—that in it the observance of the Mosaic law, however pious and strict it might be, cannot generally have been regarded as necessary to salvation.

#### § 4. THE CONVENTION OF APOSTLES

Certainly the Church at Jerusalem was not unanimous. Already, at the conversion of Cornelius, we read that Peter was questioned on account of his procedure, and that his critics could be quieted only by the appeal to the manifest judgment of God, in the outpouring of the Spirit on Cornelius and his house (xi. 2–18). How much more must reflection have been excited in Jerusalem by the state of things at Antioch, where the non-observance of the ritual law was at the very foundation of the Church's life! Judaic Christians came to Antioch, disapproved of what they saw, and urged the additional acceptance of circumcision, and indeed of all the Mosaic regulations, as conditions of salvation (xv. 1). It is the first public appearance of that Judaizing mode of thought which afterwards opposed the Apostle Paul in the whole course of his activity, and sought to snatch from him the Churches he had created. The logic, that whoever would have part in the Messianic promises of Israel must also take upon himself

the legal obligations of Israel, was to the common understanding of men at that time extremely simple and clear, although it contained a falsification of Christianity so fundamental that Paul, with the utmost severity, describes its representatives as false brethren creeping in unawares, and hurls straight against them an anathema (Gal. i. 8, 9, ii. 4). The Acts of the Apostles does not conceal that this mode of thought was strongly supported by certain believing Phasisees in the early Church (Acts xv. 5). That it was not, however, the fundamental conviction of the Church, and especially of her leaders,—of James the brother of Jesus, and the Apostles Peter and John,—may be proved from that very occasion. Paul and Barnabas, in name of the Church at Antioch, which was thrown into great confusion, journeyed to Jerusalem in order to seek an understanding with the primitive Church and apostles. Whatever deviations from each other there may be in the two representations we have of this apostolic convention (Acts xv. and Gal. ii. 1–10), deviations arising from the different points of view from which the account is given, they quite agree in the main point. When Paul, after a fruitless public discussion as it appears (Gal. ii. 3–5), records that he explained his gospel privately to the men of note, namely, James, Peter, and John, and that they found nothing defective in it, but gave him the right-hand of fellowship, and, in recognition of special endowments on both sides, shared with him the mission to the Jews and to the Gentiles, the agreement of both sides in principle is therewith put beyond question. And there is not the slightest justification for transforming this agreement into a momentary surprise of the first apostles which could not last, or into an unprincipled compromise such as would never have been agreed to by men who daily risked their life for their faith. As to the other source, the Acts of the Apostles, it brings before us chiefly the closing public discussion, omitted by Paul, which succeeded that private understanding, in which Barnabas and Paul naturally fall into the background behind Peter and James, though these two all the more show that their opinions were genuine and in no way extorted from them. Both Peter and James agree that the Mosaic ritual law is not to be imposed upon the Gentiles; and so they make it plain that for Jewish

Christians to continue in that law is simply for the preservation of customs which God ordained for His people, and is certainly not required for salvation. But even the slight distinction which the representation makes here between the appearance of Peter and of James, in which Peter seems the more liberal, James the more conservative, has complete historical credibility. Peter reminded the assembly of his experience with Cornelius, spoke of the hearts of the Gentiles being purified by faith, that is, their becoming believers in Jesus, and warned them against laying a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither we (without injury to our conscience) nor our fathers could bear (xv. 7–11). This Peter, who felt himself purified by faith and freed from the yoke of the law, is the man who, according to Gal. ii. 11 f., in his visit to Antioch, overleaping Jewish customs and scruples, ate with the Gentiles; out of an anxious regard for the confidence of his countrymen, he allowed himself to be driven to the denial of his better knowledge; but Paul, who knew him intimately, charged him with having and with denying that better knowledge in public meeting. James was a somewhat different man, if we may infer his own way of thinking from the appearance of his delegates (Gal. ii. 12). He, indeed, as well as Peter, acquitted the Gentiles from the ritual law, and therefore voted against what those Pharisaic Christians (Acts xv. 1, 5) claimed for it, that it was essential to salvation. But as regards the Jews,—even in the diaspora,—he insists that they should continue as before to hold strictly by their national customs given them by God. That is a principle which in itself Paul does not find fault with (1 Cor. vii. 17–20), but he subordinates it to the higher requirements of Christian communion; while James, who had never been outside Palestine, had not perhaps made clear to himself that such holding by their national customs on the part of Jews must either rend the Christian community at Antioch in two or compel the Gentiles to fall in with the Jewish way of life (Gal. ii. 14). With that agrees the mediating proposal of James, recorded by the Acts as having been finally adopted by the apostolic convention (xv. 19, 20). However one may estimate the silence of the Epistle to the Galatians about the so-called decree of the apostles (xv. 23–29), of which there

seems to be a trace in Rev. ii. 24, this is certain, that the James of the Acts in no way retracts his concession, that the law should not be imposed on the Gentiles. For his four requirements, corresponding to the so-called Noachian or proselyte commandments, are neither the Mosaic law nor an extract from it. But along with a supreme moral requirement, which Paul preaches with equal decision, as a requirement of Christian life,—the prohibition of *πορνεία*, demanded by the general confusion of ideas among the Gentiles regarding the intercourse of the sexes,—they embrace only some acts of abstinence in food and drink, desirable for preventing offence in the intercourse of Jews and Gentiles, such as Paul likewise requires of his Gentile Christians for the sake of brotherly love, but which could not possibly be thought of by James as conditions of salvation. In this affair then both James and Peter, and the majority of the primitive Church which adhered to them, are seen to have rested their righteousness before God and their assurance of salvation not in any ritual observance, however great their attachment and veneration for the law of their fathers may have been. If they had not as yet made clear to themselves all that was involved in their fundamental Christian experience, those discussions with Paul and Barnabas must have served to enlighten them on the subject. For that reason also it is not conceivable that an understanding such as that of the apostolic convention could have been a merely transitory one, or that an incident such as that at Antioch (Gal. ii. 11 f.) could have been, as we are told again and again, the starting-point for Peter's permanently relapsing into legality. Still those views and explanations of the first apostles only cleared the way for the deliverance of the gospel from Jewish legality. The gospel was not thought out and doctrinally developed from the principle of that freedom from Judaism which was indispensable to its becoming at home in the Gentile world. To perform that spiritual work was not the business of the first apostles, but of the man to whom they, with a correct feeling about their respective gifts and tasks, said, "We to the Jews, and you to the Gentiles" (Gal. ii. 9).

***II. THE EPISTLE OF JAMES*****CHAPTER I****INTRODUCTORY****§ 1. OPINIONS REGARDING THE EPISTLE OF JAMES**

The records of the Acts of the Apostles concerning primitive Christianity leave something to be desired in the way of supplement. They give us, on the one hand, the main points of the Church's evangelism and defence, and, on the other hand, a picture of the Church's life, with its practical principles. But we get no view of how the first apostles continued Jesus' own teaching and fulfilled the commission : "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. xxviii. 19). The Epistle of James fills this gap; if it is genuine, it is the work of a man who, through his near relationship with Jesus, as well as his striking personality, certainly enjoyed, as we saw above, the highest respect in the mother Church as restored after the persecution. For it is indisputable that this James the brother of the Lord (Gal. i. 19, ii. 9 ; Acts xv. 13 f., xxi. 18) is meant in the heading of the Epistle, and not the Apostle James, Zebedee's son, who was already killed (Acts xii. 2), nor even the younger Apostle James, who remains entirely unknown. The Epistle called after him has met with much disfavour, and its genuineness has also been contested. But that which, from the dogmatic point of view, makes some question its genuineness is rather, as we shall prove, in its favour from the historic point of view, which here can alone settle the matter. If the wavering of the early Church on the point is explained by the want of an apostolic name, by the exclusiveness of the Jewish Christian circles in whose possession it originally was, and by the surprise which, when it came into wider circulation, the meagreness of its dogmatic and especially christological contents could not fail to excite, the testimony of the Peshito, which includes it in the Canon in the place where it probably originated, outweighs the absence of a great

deal of other testimony. Even Luther's notable rejection of the Epistle proceeded from dogmatic offence. Its apparent want of positively Christian teaching, and especially its supposed contradiction to Paul in the matter of *sola fides*, turns the scale. Even the moderns have carped long enough at the supposed polemic against the Epistle to the Romans, which is not even well directed ; and now in recent times the alternative has been reached, that the Epistle must either be post-apostolic or pre-Pauline. Those who follow the first view wish to recognise in it the standpoint of the old Catholic period, in which the gospel is conceived as *nova lex*, and a simple practical Christianity insisted on, in opposition to the Pauline speculations. But the perfect law of liberty (i. 25), which the Epistle proclaims as the essential foundation of Christianity, is not a *nova lex*, opposed to the old Mosaic law, but the old Mosaic law itself made inward, and in Christ's sense perfect, which yields the standpoint of the Sermon on the Mount, and not that of the old Catholic age. Even apart from this, it can only be regarded as critical violence to compare the youthful freshness of this, in every respect primitive document with the initiative productions of the second century. The acceptance of the Epistle as decidedly pre-Pauline, and the earliest New Testament document, has now become necessary, and is ever gaining new adherents. This view, which we have defended elsewhere, we maintain here also.<sup>1</sup>

## § 2. THE CIRCLE OF READERS

The following exposition will show how far the doctrinal contents of the Epistle, especially the celebrated discussion about justification by faith and works, go to support this view. But even apart from this, the historical situation of the readers, when one gets a clear idea of it, decides in favour of the pre-Pauline age of the Epistle. These readers, from the whole style in which they are addressed, and from all indications of their manners and customs, are Jewish

<sup>1</sup> Cf. for this conception, represented by Schneckenburger, Ritschl, Weiss, Mangold, etc., my essay, "Der Jacobusbrief als urchristliches Geschichtsdenkmal" (*Stud. und Krit.* 1874), and my revision of Meyer's commentary on the Epistle.

Christians. When the writer salutes them as the twelve tribes of the dispersion, that is, the nation of Israel scattered in foreign lands, and since they are manifestly Christians, his view must be, that believers in Christ are the true representatives of the Jewish nation, and that Christianity is still within Judaism. There runs through the whole Epistle a remarkable relation of religious opposition, and social connection of rich and poor. The Christians are for the most part poor, and the poor are essentially fitted for Christianity (ii. 6). On the other hand, the rich are throughout thought of as non-Christian, even where, as in i. 9–11, v. 1 f., nothing is announced to them but destruction by God's judgment. They oppress the poor Christians, drag them before the judgment-seat, and blaspheme the worthy name by which they are called, that is, the name of Jesus into which they have been baptized (ii. 6, 7). Yet both classes have to do with each other. The rich are employers of the poor (v. 4), and have in other respects judicial power over them (ii. 6, 7), and sometimes one of them comes as a guest into the assemblies of the poor Christians, and is honoured by them in a submissive manner (ii. 2). The riddle of this relation can only be solved in a natural way when we see in the rich the non-Christians, countrymen of the readers, who are held together with them by the bond of Jewish communal polity in the diaspora. In Syria, the neighbouring country to the north of Palestine, the early existence of Christian circles which remained under the jurisdiction of the Jewish synagogue is placed beyond all doubt by the history of Paul as the persecutor (Acts ix. 1, 2), and the readers of the Epistle of James are in the very same circumstances. The Jewish communities in the diaspora, to which the Romans had given considerable rights of self-government vested in the synagogue authorities, contain a minority of believers in Christ, who in their own meeting-place come together (ii. 2), but in other respects are subject to the jurisdiction of the Jewish synagogue, in which they can be persecuted and punished for the name of Jesus (ii. 6, 7). There is also mirrored in this diaspora a relation between the rich and the poor, which appeared in the later history of Israel, and appears more than once in the Gospel, viz. that the pious are the poor, and the

poor the pious. The believers in Christ here, as in the primitive Church, are composed chiefly of the poor and lowly, while the rich and mighty of their people, by whom they must partly live, stand in opposition to them, and oppress them in every way. If this describes correctly the historical conditions of the receivers of the Epistle,—and no other view of the Epistle has yet been able to make this situation probable or clear,—then the Epistle can only be placed before the great mission to the Gentiles carried on from Antioch, and therefore before the apostolic convention. For such Church relations in the lands about Palestine must have been speedily transformed by the large scale of the mission to the Gentiles. As soon as large numbers of Gentile Christians appeared by the side of Jewish Christians, the latter detached themselves from the Jewish synagogue and joined themselves with the former in a religious society, which formed a *tertium* over against Jews and Gentiles (*Xριστιανοί*, Acts xi. 26; 1 Pet. iv. 16), and so won an essentially different social position from that which is mirrored in our Epistle. These purely Jewish-Christian Churches of the diaspora are indeed no longer in their first love and enthusiasm as we have known it in the primitive Church, and that is just what causes James to write to them. Outward misery, social oppression, continuous persecution, besides the delay of the parousia, which was hoped for as quite near, have without doubt discouraged them, and produced among them conditions of decline in which may be easily seen the reaction of the old Jewish nature. Complaints against God, who makes it too hard for the poor man (i. 13), a hankering after the renounced goods and enjoyments of this world (iv. 1–4), indolent reliance on the possession of objective truth and a dead faith had taken hold on them (ii. 14), and in place of meekness of mind before God (i. 21, iii. 13) and zeal in the works of love and sanctification (i. 22, 27), had entered quarrels and contentions and all kinds of sins of the tongue (iii. 1 f., iv. 1 f., v. 12). These are conditions of decay in primitive Christianity which do not require a longer period from the founding of the Church than, in the case of the Corinthian Church, lies between its founding and the conditions mirrored in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. We may fairly think of the time of Herod Agrippa (45),

whose bigoted and antichristian government in the mother country (Acts xii.) had undoubtedly encouraged the Jewish diaspora in neighbouring countries to oppressive intolerance towards the Christians in their midst.

### § 3. THE AUTHOR

If the Epistle belongs to these circumstances, then there can be no doubt as to its actual composition by James the brother of Jesus. But it would also be difficult to discover any reason why a later age should attribute the Epistle to this author; and if it had, its author would certainly have designated himself the ἀδελφὸς τοῦ κυρίου, and not merely His δοῦλος (i. 1), which would suit any other James just as well. But the author gives us an unconscious but thoroughly characteristic portrait, which is in remarkable agreement with what is known to us from other quarters of the historical James. It is the portrait of one of those "meek in the land," who, in immediately pre-Christian times, preserved, as the best inheritance of the nation, the inward piety of the psalmists and prophets in their retirement and godly poverty, one of those whom Jesus, in the introduction to His Sermon on the Mount, greets as members of His kingdom, and whose watch-word He acknowledges in His saying, ὅτι πραύς εἰμι καὶ ταπεινὸς τῇ καρδίᾳ (Matt. xi. 29). This is the portrait of a man who, although himself mighty in earnest and powerful words, makes little of words and more of a quiet reverential hearing of the divine word, and most of a real doing of the same; a Christian sage whose quiet firmness rests on indifference to the world's wealth, and desire for the riches of God. The expression of his piety is partly of the Old and partly of the New Testament, so that it is evident that he has passed into Christianity from that in Judaism which was nearest to it, and has therefore never felt the need of detaching himself from Jewish forms of thought and life. Law and gospel are to him not contrasts, but rather equivalents, for the law of Moses has become to him the perfect law of liberty, it is the law of love to God and his neighbour written on his heart, which rules him from within. And so also there has come to him the blessed experience of a new life from God (i. 18)

through "the implanted word of truth," through faith in the "Lord Jesus, the Messiah of glory," which in the *πραγτης ἀνωθεν σοφias*, in the meekness of the wisdom from above (iii. 13, 17), lifts him high above the desire and suffering of this world. But all that this experience of salvation implies has not yet been considered by him, and so, whilst he boldly confesses Jesus as the Christ and Lord, he has scarcely anything to say about His person and work. There is no book in the New Testament which gives so much of Jesus and so little of Christ, and there is no one which so often reminds us, both in tone and even in word, of the synoptic records of Jesus' teaching, though there is nothing to suggest a written source. The Epistle is written in the style of the Old Testament wisdom, nourished with the marrow of the prophets and psalmists, in Greek, which, though handled with intelligence and power, yet sometimes betrays the awkwardness of a man not learned and instructed in it; it is by no means without plan or connection, as has been asserted, but is a genuine letter and not an essay, and it passes from one thing to another by consideration of the spiritual needs of the readers. What prominent man is there in all Christian antiquity in whom all these strong features of character are so well marked as in James the brother of the Lord? James, belonging to the circle of the pious poor, as doubtless did the whole family of Jesus (Luke i. 2; Matt. v. 3), standing long in doubt at a distance, and only becoming a believer after the resurrection of Jesus (Mark iii. 21, 31 f.; John vii. 5; 1 Cor. xv. 7; Acts i. 14), one of the pillars of the primitive Church, most heartily attached to the Jewish law and nationality, and yet free enough to give the right hand of fellowship to Paul (Gal. ii.; Acts xv.), James the Just, as he was called in the early Church tradition, a saint in the eyes both of Christians and Jews, who prayed without ceasing for his people, and was finally a witness unto blood for Jesus; such a man was supremely fitted for speaking with holy earnestness to Jewish Christianity in its incipient languor and decadence, as these are mirrored in the Epistle, and are displayed on another side a little later by the Judaising opponents of Paul. And if he spoke, must it not be in such words as these? It has been objected here that the historical James, as we know him from

the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Galatians, as well as from Jewish-Christian reminiscences, could not possibly have been silent about the ritual law, whose observance on the part of Jewish Christians lay so near to his heart (Gal. ii. 12). A most wonderful objection, for it was not the observance of the ritual law that was endangered in those exclusively Jewish-Christian circles. His readers were defective, not in its observance, but in living Christianity. There was no occasion to allude to what was self-evident and was not called in question, and especially as James, though he honoured the ritual law, did not, at anyrate, make salvation dependent on it. The ritual piety (*θρησκεία*) of the readers is only once touched on (i. 26, 27), and that reference is in the tone of a man in whom lived the spirit of the prophets and of Jesus, as contrasted with a declining Jewish Christianity. He reminds them that *θρησκεία* is nothing if it coexists with an unbridled tongue and self-deception, and that the true *θρησκεία*, which is well-pleasing to the heavenly Father, is that of works of love and of sanctification.

This man's mode of thought, so far as it may be gathered from hints in an Epistle which, properly speaking, discusses only one doctrinal theme, and that partially, while it barely touches on all others, may be best described under the following heads :—

- I. God and man.
- II. The Christian revelation of salvation.
- III. Faith and works.
- IV. Justification.
- V. The Christian life.

## CHAPTER II

### GOD AND MAN

James' whole view of the world is conditioned by a very definite idea of God on which he insists in his teaching, whilst he suffers the doctrine of the Mediator of salvation to fall into the background. This is really Jesus' own idea of God, the new and perfect Christian idea of God, though in James

it has an Old Testament form. As a rule, God in Old Testament fashion is called *ὁ κύρος* (this name seldom refers to Christ in James, and there is always express indication when this is the case), or in the fuller expression, Lord of Sabaoth (v. 4); yet the New Testament name of Father is not wanting (*θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ*, i. 27; *τὸν κύριον καὶ πατέρα*, iii. 9), and is applied without an added genitive, that is, it does not so much describe God's relation as God's nature. And the nature of God is more closely described in the peculiar expression *τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν φώτων* (i. 17). The *φῶτα* are the lights of heaven, sun, moon, and stars (cf. Gen. i. 16). God is not, however, called their Father because He created them, for He would in like manner be the Father of every creature; as the context testifies, He is their Father because they are in His likeness, as it were His children who resemble Him. The name is meant to remind us that God's nature is light, excluding all darkness (cf. 1 John i. 5). But in the spiritual and moral sphere God far surpasses these images of Him which belong to the kingdom of nature. They as lights increase and decrease, and are subject to temporary eclipse; but with Him is no change nor shadow of turning (i. 17). In plain words, His nature is pure goodness, moral perfection. Therefore He is also called (i. 13) *ἀπείραστος κακῶν*, untempted of evil, that is, incapable of being tempted. He is raised above all temptation to evil, because He is goodness itself personified, and so also He can tempt no one, i. 13 (to evil). On the contrary, none but good and perfect gifts come from above from the Father of lights,—for *πᾶσα*, just as in ver. 2, must be translated thus, if it is to fit into the connection.<sup>1</sup> We see that it is the same idea of God which Jesus expresses when in the presence of the rich young man He calls God the *εἰς ἀγαθός*, or describes Him to His disciples as the original of all kindness and goodness, as the Perfect One (Matt. v. 48). But the Old Testament was not yet able to speak of God in this way.

<sup>1</sup> That God is untemptable, and entices no man to evil, cannot be based upon the fact that all good gifts come from Him, for then evil gifts might also come from Him. It is based alone upon the fact that only good and perfect gifts come from Him.

## § 2. MAN

The chief object of this eternal goodness and fatherly love is man, who is created in God's image (iii. 9). The way in which James insists on the latter idea, especially when he rebukes sins of the tongue against *τοὺς καθ' ὅμοίωσιν θεοῦ γεγονότας*, shows plainly that he knows nothing of a loss of the divine image through the Fall, of which the later Church doctrine speaks; but (just as in Gen. ix. 6) he recognises in man as we know him, that is, in sinful man, the divine image—an affinity to God which ought to make every man an inviolable being for his neighbour. Man created in God's image is, in his original nature, meant and fitted for loving God and attaining the crown of (eternal) life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him (i. 12). But as God is the one true, perfect, and eternal Good for man, so He desires to be loved and sought with the whole heart. His Spirit, which He has made to dwell in us, is in iv. 5 said to love jealously: He will share with no other the heart which He has chosen as His own; His is like the exclusive matrimonial love of marriage, and a holy fidelity He requites with the greater grace (iv. 6). But there is another who contends with God for the human heart, viz. the world. The world is to James, as is proved by ii. 5, iv. 4, with their context, the sum of all that is finite, vain, and worthless. Man, in virtue of the sensuous side of his nature,—his members, in which are rooted his lusts and passions (iv. 1; cf. i. 14),—has likewise a relation to this world; and hence arises the temptation for the soul to love God and the world at the same time, and so become an adulteress (iv. 4). But this attempt to be, as it were, two souls (iv. 8) is vain; the love of the world is enmity to God; he who will be the friend of the world, becomes the enemy of God (iv. 4). For he no longer sees in God the one true and eternal Good. He esteems Him little, and will also esteem His commandments little in contrast with the lusts and passions which draw him to vanity. It is as though we were listening to Jesus' preaching: "No man can serve two masters: ye cannot serve God and mammon. What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

## § 3. SIN

The sin which is thus possible through the double relation of man to God and to the world, is now fact and reality. James simply assumes this, without, so far as we can see, asking about the coming of sin into the world. He only describes the way in which the sinful process advances in the individual. "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and is enticed. Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death (i. 14, 15). Here lust, evil desire, is conceived as the root of sin in man. It is not the real man, the man of the will, who appears rather as the object of its allurement and seduction, and so it is not yet sin in the actual sense of the word. Sin appears only when the lust, the courtesan, succeeds in capturing the man's will, so that he surrenders to it. Sin is thus an unlawful child of the desire and the will. James does not mean by sin simply the solitary act, he prefers to think of sinful tendencies, such as murmuring, doubting, envying, hating (iv. 2). When such sins have grown up, their fruit is death ; that is, not the moment of bodily death, but spiritual death, despair, the falling away from faith, the destruction of the soul. This peculiar use of the word death occurs again in v. 20 (*σώσει ψυχὴν ἐκ θανάτου*), and we meet it also in Paul and John. Its origin seems to be in Gen. ii. 17 ("the day in which thou eatest, thou shalt surely die"), for Adam on the day of his sin did not die bodily, but he became a child of death. Death here is not the opposite of existence, but the opposite of life in the full sense of the word ; it is the spiritual destruction from which there is still, according to v. 20, deliverance (*σώσει ἐκ θανάτου*). According to this description of the course of sin in man, James seems to seek its cause in the sensuous side of human nature, for the *ἐπιθυμίαι* have their roots in the *μέλη*, the bodily organs, in which also the lusts carry on war (iv. 1), that is, are actively desirous of plunder and conquest. And that the sensuous side of man must be eminently active in sin follows also from the opposition, above alluded to, of God and the world of sense in which man is placed. Still there are two things to be observed. First, according to i. 14, 15, actual sin takes

place only in virtue of the consent of the man, the personal will, to the solicitation of desire. And second, James recognises other than immediately sensuous sins, such as envy, contentions, murmurings and slander, pride, and even doubt (that is, the want of serious belief that God is the only true Good, and so it is a wavering between God and the world); finally, he recognises as sin the indolent omission of the good which one could have done (iv. 17). Even these spiritual sins, as the context proves (iv. 1–10), spring from the warring lusts in the members. They appear naturally in the train of the sinful longing for earthly enjoyment. Self-seeking is at the root of this desire; as a natural principle it has its place in the whole life of sense, and when this principle of self-seeking is unrestrained it manifests itself also in tendencies of the will, which are not of themselves of a sensuous nature. It is thus easy to understand how sin in James, although it rests on the sensuous nature in man, should develop a kind of wisdom, viz. that selfish prudence, which, as it belongs to the baser and worldly side of the soul, and is thus called “ψυχική,” manifests itself in envy, intrigue, and confusion of the social life of men (iii. 14–16) (*ἀκαταστασία*). And so we may also understand that one great group of sins is composed of the misdeeds of the unbridled tongue, which are certainly not sensuous but are selfish. It is easy to understand, further, that besides the sinful human world, there exists also to James an evil world of spirits, the *διάβολος* (iv. 7) and the *δαιμονία* (ii. 19, cf. iii. 15, where the *σοφίᾳ ἐπίγειος* is also called *δαιμονιώδης*). For evil is a power that encroaches on the individual life, a world-spirit which seductively assails the individual, although, if he cling to God, he can put him to flight (iv. 7). And this single principle of evil in the world is again divided into a number of pernicious powers within its sphere: these are the demons whom James undoubtedly conceives in a popular and mythological way, and whose terror before the living God, asserted in ii. 19, he probably learned from the conduct of the possessed, who were exorcised in the name of God.

#### § 4. THE POSITION OF GOD TOWARDS SINFUL MEN

The position of God towards man as sinful is described in accordance with His nature as the simply good, His nature as light. His moral perfection has necessarily the two sides, that He demands everything good, and that He grants everything good. In respect of the first, He has revealed His perfect goodness in His law (i. 25, ii. 8-12). That the Mosaic law is meant by this *vόμος* is shown by the reference to the Ten Commandments in ii. 11; but a different view of this law is taken from that which was fostered by the scribes and Pharisees among the Jews, though such a view as might be expected from a deeper and more genuine Judaism even before Christ. For while the Pharisaic-Rabbinic doctrine of the law was split up into a thousand particular maxims, James conceived it as a living and inviolable unity. "Who-soever shall keep the whole law," he says (ii. 10, 11), "and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all. For He who said, Thou shalt not commit adultery, said also, Thou shalt not kill. Now, if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law." In other words, the holy will of God which is expressed in the law is in itself an undivided indissoluble whole. The satisfaction of all its demands is required in order to give a truly righteous man, and whoever violates it in one point has violated its collective demand, and is not righteous in the sight of God, but sinful and guilty. But although the one Lawgiver and Judge, "who is able to save and to destroy" (iv. 12), appears so infinitely strict in this view, yet His desire is—and this leads us over to the beneficent side of His goodness—not to destroy, but to save, for He is very pitiful and of tender mercy (v. 11). He giveth willingly and *ἀπλῶς*, simply, without upbraiding the petitioner, or reproaching him beforehand, as a half merciful man does (i. 5). He gives readily, especially to him who asks for wisdom. For the wisdom, the Old Testament notion of which approximates in James to the New Testament notion of the Holy Spirit (cf. iii. 17), is the one true means of help in attaining the moral goal, the divine power for becoming perfect (i. 4, 5). But God also forgives sin (v. 15); wherever a sinner is converted a multitude of sins

are covered, that is, forgiven (v. 20), and mercy rejoices against judgment (ii. 13), that is, it has not to fear judgment —the merciful will obtain mercy (Matt. v. 7). Thus the rigour of the divine judgment is modified as regards those who turn themselves to His mercy. If he who transgresses only one commandment is guilty of all, and he only who offends not in word a perfect man (iii. 2), yet even in the Old Testament God pardoned sinful men, not only an Abraham, but also a Rahab, the forerunner of publicans and sinners (ii. 25), and prepared a glorious end for Job, who certainly was not a man who offended not in word (v. 11). James does not tell us how those inviolable demands of the law for righteousness are reconciled with such gracious procedure on God's part. But this is certain, that he has put no gulf, which must be mediated by some deed of expiation, embracing the world, between divine righteousness and grace. But just as we have already found in the teaching of Jesus, and as corresponds to the faith of prophets and psalmists, he thinks rather of a righteous conduct of God which gives *suum cuique*, in the sense of love which renders help where one will let himself be helped, and only denies itself where one denies himself to it. "Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you" (iv. 18). "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble" (iv. 6). To him who prays aright in believing surrender He gives His divine wisdom, but the doubting who waver between Him and the world will receive nothing (i. 5, 7). Judgment without mercy will be passed on him who does not exercise mercy; on the other hand, mercy rejoiceth against judgment (ii. 13). All these sayings, reminding us of well-known synoptic sayings of Jesus, rest upon the idea of that righteousness of love, that holy goodness, which comes to meet all those who seek it, and will confront with the full strictness of judgment only those who will not allow themselves to be helped by it into goodness. From this it is clear that the righteous and good God will reach His hand to the sinful man, especially with the view to his becoming righteous and good; and that leads us over to the experience and preaching of salvation peculiar to James.

## CHAPTER III

## THE SALVATION THAT IS IN CHRIST

## § 1. THE SECOND BIRTH

James represents the fundamental Christian experience in one great, simple declaration: "He, that is, God, of His own will begat us through the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures"—you know it, my beloved brethren (i 18, 19). It is almost the only direct declaration of the Epistle concerning the salvation experienced in Christ; but it is significant enough. It is the fact of a new life from God on which the Christian consciousness rests; not the mere fact of forgiveness of sin, or justification, but an inner transformation, a spiritual renewal from the bottom of the heart, such as Jesus set before Nicodemus as the fundamental condition of sharing in the kingdom of God (John iii. 3, 5), and such as was already required in the synoptic introduction to the Sermon on the Mount when that is rightly understood, *μετανοεῖτε*. This fundamental condition is fulfilled in the author and his readers, not by their own doings and performances, but by God's free goodness: "*βούληθεις ἀπεκύησεν ἡμᾶς*," of His own free will. James immediately before had reminded them that none but good and perfect gifts could come down from the Father of lights, the pure goodness of heaven; and of that, this the best and the most perfect gift which he or his readers could receive is the full and sufficient proof. And this greatest favour of God is enhanced by the fact that in it they have been privileged above innumerable others—that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures. God of His free goodness has chosen them before other nations, before the mass of their own people, and made them an *ἀπαρχή*, consecrated to Him out of His whole rational creation. In them, as the first-fruits, He has initiated humanity into the kingdom of God. And He has done so by the *λόγῳ ἀληθείας*, by the word of truth, by which we are, of course, to think of the gospel as the word of God's perfect revelation. This second birth by the word has some-

times been described as a mystic element peculiar to James; but in this the fact is overlooked that the same view, only somewhat more diffusely stated, is repeated in the First Epistle of Peter (1 Pet. i. 23–25), and also that both authors only repeat a fundamental thought of Jesus. When, in the Parable of the Sower, Jesus compares the word preached by Him to good seed which He scatters in the heart, and which, wherever it finds good soil, brings forth a new development of life leading to good fruits, what is that but the new birth through the word of truth? It is quite a cognate image when James (i. 21) describes the word of truth as the *λόγος ἐμφύτος* which is able to save their souls (in the final judgment), as the word implanted in the heart of the readers whose final result is their ultimate *σωτηρία*.

## § 2. THE ELECTION AND PROMISE

The same fact of salvation is described in another way in ii. 5 : "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world that they may be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?" Redemption is here brought to remembrance more on its objective historical side. Of course, we are not to think of an act of God before the world was in the case of the *ἐξελέξατο ὁ Θεός*; but just as the choice of Abraham or of Israel in the Old Testament is simply the divine thought of love appearing in history and carried out in a divine work for Abraham and Israel, so here also in the first days of the gospel the election is conceived as the divine purpose to make especially the poor and humble in Israel citizens of the kingdom of heaven. We are thus carried back to the days of Jesus and the beginnings of the Church, in which the poor and lowly were the very people who were laid hold of by the gospel, and the rich and mighty were excluded. Their special susceptibility for the glad message was that in them which corresponded to the divine choice, and gave them the advantage over those. This confirms our idea that the word of truth through which God has regenerated the poor was Jesus' preaching of the kingdom of heaven. In the *κληρονόμους τῆς βασιλείας*, *ἥς ἐπηγγειλατο*, the kingdom of heaven or kingdom

of God, this main theme of Jesus, we recognise an unmistakable echo of the introductory words of the Sermon on the Mount (Luke vi. 20 ; Matt. v. 3). But we see at the same time that James, like the first apostles, conceives the kingdom as still in the future. It is promised, they are chosen to inherit it, but they have not yet inherited it ; they are rich, but only in faith. The predominating tendency of the primitive apostolic Christianity to dwell in the future meets us here again, and will still further meet us. The idea of the kingdom as already present is not yet formally appropriated, though being born again, and rich in faith, the present possession of salvation is fully felt. Besides the idea of the kingdom, there likewise appears that of life, true eternal life, as a designation of salvation, and it is also conceived as in the future, and is described as the very substance of the gospel (cf. i. 12, *στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς, δν ἐπηγγεῖλατο τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτὸν* with ii. 5, *τῆς βασιλείας, ἡς ἐπηγγείλατο τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτὸν*) ; but this corresponds to the kindred meaning of the two words which we have noted in the synoptic teaching of Jesus. As salvation proper is regarded as future, the gospel of Jesus in this aspect appears under the Old Testament idea of the promise (i. 12, ii. 5). On the other hand, which is a still more remarkable evidence of the Old Testament form of his Christian thought, the author conceives it as law, in order to emphasise what value it has for the Christian even now.

### § 3. THE LAW OF LIBERTY

After James has connected the new birth with the act of God through the word of truth, and has exhorted to a fuller reception of this word now planted in the soul, he goes on to remind them that it is not sufficient to be mere hearers, but that they must likewise be doers of the word (i. 22). And in carrying out this idea he changes his phrase, and the word (of truth) becomes a perfect law of liberty (i. 25). The expression recurs once more (ii. 12) in the statement that the Christian shall one day be judged by the law of liberty ; and immediately before, the commandment to love our neighbour gets a similar designation, *νόμος βασιλικός* (ii. 8.) It is

clear then that a word of truth which is not merely to be heard but (like John iii. 21) is to be done, must somehow be comprehended under the concept of law, that is, of a rule of action; and the concepts *λόγος ἀληθείας* and *νόμος τῆς ἐλευθερίας*, i. 18, 22, and 25, must coincide to a great extent, though not completely. But what kind of law is meant by the perfect law of liberty? That we cannot think of a Christian rule of life different from the Mosaic law, like the *nova lex* which was thought of in the second century, is proved by the passage noted above (ii. 10, 11) in which two of the Mosaic Ten Commandments are adduced as constituent parts of that *νόμος*; while, on the other hand, there is nothing to suggest a distinction from the Mosaic law. And yet the mere Mosaic law, in the sense in which it formed the Jewish rule of life, cannot be meant either; for it is no *νόμος τέλειος*, and still less a *νόμος τῆς ἐλευθερίας*, and there is nowhere mention of the ritual part of the Mosaic law. The expression *νόμος τέλειος* reminds us of Jesus' declaration in the Sermon on the Mount, that He wished to fulfil the law, that is, to make it perfect. Now, since that fulfilment consists in giving the individual commandments their true meaning as parts of the fundamental commandment of love to God and to our neighbour, and since James, in an expression directly reminding us of Jesus' words as to the greatest commandment, declares the commandment of love to our neighbour to be *νόμος βασιλικός*, the foremost and dominating commandment, the conclusion forces itself upon us that he can only have meant by the perfect law, the Mosaic law as expounded by Jesus. And it is called "the law of liberty," not because it is given for the state of Christian freedom, for redeemed men, for such concepts are unknown to the Epistle, and the phrase cannot be naturally made to yield them,<sup>1</sup> but simply because it is not a slavish law constraining from without, but a law of the heart which freely obeys. A law of love—and according to ii. 8, the law of liberty is that to James—can only rule from within, and therefore freely, since love can neither be commanded nor threatened, but only guided from within, that is, freely or not at all. The expression reminds us of Jeremiah's prophecy of the new covenant, in which the

<sup>1</sup> Against Weiss, *N. T. Theol.* i. 251.

law is to be written on the heart and put in the inward parts, and as James calls the *λόγος ἀληθείας*, which, according to i. 23, includes the commandment of the law of liberty, a *λόγος ἔμφυτος*, we learn from his own lips the way in which the perfect law has become spiritualised to the Christians, and thus at the same time a law of liberty. It is easy to see how closely this view of the gospel, on the one hand, as a promise of the kingdom of heaven, and on the other, as the perfected and spiritualised law, follows Jesus' method of teaching, in which, besides the glad tidings of the near approach of the kingdom, there is an exhibition of that kingdom's demand for righteousness in a more spiritual exposition of the Mosaic law, and at the close of the Sermon on the Mount there is a demand, almost in the same words as in James, for a hearing and doing of the word. On the other hand, no greater contrast can be conceived, in form at least, to the Pauline mode of teaching, in which law and gospel are the opposite poles of divine revelation, than this view, which brings the gospel itself, at least as seen from one side, under the notion of law. If in this contrast James has the Old Testament joy in the law on his side, and the devout life of the Old Testament saints in the commandments of God (cf. the *παρακύπτειν*, the steeping oneself in the law, i. 25), it cannot be denied that the greater keenness and comprehensiveness of theological idea is on the side of Paul. For if the saving character of the gospel cannot be sufficiently comprehended in the notion of promise, how much less in that of law! The power by which the law is put within men and written on their hearts, and so made the law of liberty, is neither promise nor legislation, and yet it is the main thing. This power James knows and rejoices in (i. 18), but he is not yet able to grasp its significance as the central point of Christian thought and teaching, or to make it his starting-point in exhibiting Christianity in its novelty and peculiarity. This also means, that to him Christ, the personal source of that power, has not yet become the central point of his doctrinal thought.

#### § 4. JESUS THE CHRIST AND LORD

For this is the remarkable thing that distinguishes the Epistle of James from all other New Testament writings, that the person of the Saviour comes so little to the front in it. Apart from the greeting, there is but one passage (ii. 1) that declares anything directly about Him. Not that the Epistle does not contain, in the way of suggestion and presupposition, everything which the first apostolic Church and preaching has and honours in the one name in which alone is salvation. Jesus is indeed *Xristós*, the Messiah; the name Christ has become His own name, and that is confession enough. But Jesus is also *κύριος*, ὁ *κύριος ἡμῶν* (i. 1, ii. 1), and James calls himself His *δοῦλος*, just as he names himself the *δοῦλος* of God. He knows Him, therefore, as One who is exalted to the right hand of God and to divine honour, as the addition *Xristòs τῆς δόξης* (ii. 1) expressly attests: he knows that for salvation he depends not only on God, but also on Jesus Christ. The worthy name mentioned in ii. 7 (*καλὸν δνομα*), which is named over the readers, and is reviled by their persecutors after the custom of "naming over anyone the name of Him whose he is to be, can only be the name of Jesus, which in baptism was named over the readers, that so they might become His possession." And so, too, the faith of the readers is directed to Jesus as it is to God: it is a *πίστις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ* (ii. 1).<sup>1</sup> Now if, in spite of this, the name of the Saviour falls into the background in James, so that it is only twice mentioned, that is due chiefly to the fact that he is wont to consider Christianity solely as the completion of Judaism, as a crowning of God's way of salvation begun with Abraham, and he goes back beyond the person of the historical Mediator of salvation to the yet higher Author of eternal salvation. It is God who has regenerated him and his readers through the word of truth—of course through Christ. It is God who will finally judge men by the law of liberty offered to them (ii. 12, iv. 12)—of course through Christ,

<sup>1</sup> That the genitive *τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν* is to be taken in the objective sense = belief in Jesus, just as in the synoptic *πίστις θεοῦ* (Mark xi. 22), cannot in the least be doubted, since a *πίστις θεοῦ* in the subjective sense is an absurdity.

whose judicial parousia is near at hand (v. 8). Since God has already justified Abraham just as the Christian hopes to be justified by Him (ii. 21, 23); since God has already given the law through Moses, which, made perfect and planted in the heart through Christ, now rules those who believe in Him, the author does not yet feel himself urged, like the later writers of the New Testament, to give distinct prominence in his preaching to the epoch-making significance of Christ's appearance, although he fully recognises it in his heart. On the other hand, he puts the name of Jesus in the background, because, whilst he has felt the power of His saving work, he has not yet fully comprehended its meaning. As in the case of the first apostles, so also in the case of James, it is the prophetic and kingly offices on which all weight is laid. Jesus is the Prophet who has perfectly revealed the purpose of God, and the King in whose grace they hope in the judgment—the high-priestly office of Christ is essentially unrevealed to their understanding. The second birth has been brought about by the word of truth which Jesus has preached, and by the joyful message of the kingdom of God which He has promised to them that love Him (i. 12, ii. 5). This word has been planted in the heart as a power of sanctification and deliverance, whilst God has been making the fertilising rain of His Spirit follow on the sowing of Jesus (iv. 5). The completed saving work of Jesus thus presented itself to James as to the original apostles. He does not think of Christ's death upon the cross, for he has not unbelieving Jews before him to whom he would have to hold it up as blood-guiltiness, and he does not yet think of it as an expiating saving act, as is clear from the fact that he connects the forgiveness of sins only with the conversion of the sinner (v. 20) and with pious prayer and intercession, after the manner of the Old Testament (v. 15). More significant to him is the glory into which Jesus has entered through His death, and in which He will speedily return (v. 8). It is significant that the one christological declaration of the Epistle which goes beyond the name of Saviour, refers to this glory: *τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῆς δόξης* (ii. 1). Whether we refer the difficult *τῆς δόξης*, which in any case has an adjective sense, to the whole expression or specially to *Χριστοῦ* (Messiah of glory), it at least

expresses the expectation of that day on which Jesus will reappear in a glory which He did not yet possess on earth, and the view that, in virtue of this glory, He will justify to the full the names *Xριστός* and *κύριος* given to Him by faith. Then will He judge the world (v. 9), and give to those who love God and have believed on His Anointed the crown of life, the promised kingdom. And one feels from the prophetic swing of his closing chapter (v. 1–8) how eagerly in the author the πίστις Ἰησοῦ was directed to this fulfilment in the future of all Messianic expectations.

## CHAPTER IV

### FAITH AND WORKS

#### § 1. CONCEPT OF WORKS

His readers' practical defects and the practical tendency of James' own thought give the result that, although the objective announcements of salvation are so scanty, the main ideas of subjective Christianity, faith and works, are fully discussed. This appears specially in the celebrated section (ii. 14–26) which treats of justification by faith and by works. But insistence on an active Christianity comes earlier into prominence as a main concern of the Epistle. In i. 4, ὑπομονή is to have its perfect work, that is, to achieve all that is possible for it in virtue of which the Christian man shall be seen perfect and complete, that is, morally perfect. So also in the following chapters, works are not separate acts apart from the Christian character, but the practical proofs and confirmation of that character. The doer of works (*ποιητής*, *ἔργου*, i. 25) does not perform certain Pharisaic good works, he is a doer of the word which has been planted in his heart, and in which he lives and moves (i. 21, 25): that perfect law of liberty is a unity throughout all its commandments, and therefore can only be kept or transgressed as a whole (ii. 10, 12). His works, therefore, are exhibitions of love to God and to his neighbour, and they appear in other parts of the Epistle as the fundamental requirements of both law and gospel (i. 12, ii. 5, 8), or, in i. 27, as religion, pure and undefiled, mercy,

and sanctification. Distinguished examples of such works are the act of Abraham in bringing his son to the altar, for he could not more completely have proved his love for God; or the act of Rahab in receiving and sending away the spies of the Israelites, for she saved their life at the risk of her own (ii. 21, 25).

### § 2. CONCEPT OF FAITH

It is more difficult to say what James means by faith. The fact that, in accordance with his undeveloped doctrine of salvation, he refers faith at one time to Christ, and again, and much more frequently, to God (ii. 1, cf. with i. 6, ii. 19, 22, 23), makes the comprehension of the idea difficult. But more significant is the fact that James speaks of a dead faith, which he does not recognise as the true, but yet allows it to pass as an actual faith; for that the *ἔαν πίστιν λέγῃ τὶς ἔχειν* of ii. 14 is not meant in the sense of a mere apparent faith, is made plain by the words immediately following, as well as by vv. 20, 24, 26. The question, therefore, is to discover a notion of faith that unites in itself the two possibilities of being alive or dead. The notion usually accepted of a mere intellectual assent without *fiducia*, is not sufficient even for the dead faith of James, not to speak of the living. It is true that this notion seems to be justified by the passage ii. 19, where the dead faith of the readers is described by way of example as a belief that there is one God, and compared with the faith of devils who also believe that and tremble at it; but too much should not be deduced from this passage. Just as the faith of the readers was not limited in its object to the unity of God, for it was also faith in the Messiahship of Jesus at anyrate (ii. 1), so we cannot suppose this attitude in faith to be exactly the same as that of devils, though, of course, there must be a sinister likeness and affinity between the two. The context, in particular, excludes the idea that an intellectual faith without *fiducia* was in his mind; the men of dead faith really had their trust in it—though a delusive trust. They thought, according to ii. 14, that mere faith could save them. The passage i. 6 carries us further, “But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting.” Here we must not in vague

fashion understand by faith the assurance that one will get what he asks ; for even the doubter, according to ver. 7, has this cheap and, as experience shows, delusive *οἰκοθαῖ*. But as the doubter, according to i. 7, ii. 4, is to James the "double-minded" man who wavers between God and the world, who is not really and truly convinced that God is the one true Good and this world nothing but the aggregate of transitory blessings, it follows that faith in i. 6 is to him the conviction that God is, and that He is the rewarder of them that seek Him (Heb. xi. 6); in other words, that the world of the invisible and eternal possessions is the only actual world. We thus come, in the case of James, to the same notion of faith as is found in the celebrated passage Heb. xi. 1 : the conviction of the reality of supersensuous facts and blessings ; and this idea of faith—which belongs to all religions, and does not bear the special stamp of Christianity—solves the riddle lying before us. For this conviction, which, of course, includes for men a reliance on these facts and blessings of salvation, may be living and operative, the motive power of the moral life in those who cherish it ; or it may be dead and inactive, and encourage men in an unreasonable confidence. And in the latter case the faith of the man has a far-reaching likeness to that of demons, who, as is proved by their trembling, know that those facts and saving blessings are of no use to them ; both have the certainty in which is no blessing or moral fruit, and in which at last there is condemnation. And it is not without meaning that James (ii. 19) takes hold of the main article of Jewish faith, the confession of monotheism. Just as all Jews prided themselves on this point of distinction from heathendom, and excused themselves for all their ungodliness because they were right in this, for which Paul reproaches them (Rom. ii. 17 ff.), the readers of our Epistle, under the influence of a reaction in which what was bad in Judaism had reappeared, had also allowed this indolent reliance in the mere facts and hopes of their Christian faith to take hold of them.

### § 3. RELATION BETWEEN FAITH AND WORKS

But we only gain perfect clearness about the concepts faith and works when we contemplate the relation which

James conceives to exist between the two. It has been thought that we must understand them in James as two independent powers standing beside each other, and barely capable of a union, or connection, and that we must, on the other hand, set aside the idea of works as proceeding from faith.<sup>1</sup> This view, which is supported especially by the co-operation of faith and works, asserted in ii. 22, cannot, however, be maintained. The injunction ii. 1, "Have not your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons" (not in any sectional spirit), shows that the author regards Christian faith as carrying with it moral consequences. That appears still more plainly in ii. 18; if faith cannot be proved without works, if it can and must be proved by works, then works must somehow proceed from faith. And how could James, from the examples he adduces, have conceived the relation otherwise than he has done? James could not fail to see that Abraham's willingness to offer his son in sacrifice to God sprang from his trust in God, and the confidence that God is better than the dearest earthly possession; in the same way he must have seen that the deed of Rahab proceeded from her faith in the superior might and approaching victory of the God of Israel. Therefore, according to James, faith and works do stand in the relation of tree and fruit; but there are unfruitful trees, and there is a faith which lacks the normal impulse to prove its quality in conduct. That is in no way opposed by the declaration of ver. 22, that faith co-operates with works (*συνεργεῖ*), and by works is made perfect. For the *συνεργεῖ* does not mean that faith helps works, springing up independently of it, to perfect themselves, but that it co-operates with them in order to bring about justification; this reading is absolutely necessary, for it could not be said of the works, which are also described as active in the word *συνεργεῖ*, that they produced themselves. So also the δὲ η̄ πίστις χωρὶς τῶν ἐργῶν ἀργή̄ ἔστιν does not mean: it is worthless to good works, for James did not need to tell anybody that a faith without works is inoperative, *ἀργή̄*; but it means, that such a faith is ineffectual for justification. But that tree and fruit combine to secure the approval of the Gardener, that religious faith and its moral proof work together to win for

<sup>1</sup> So Weissenbach, *Exegetisch-theologische Studie über Jac.* ii. 14–28. 1871.

man the divine recognition of being just, is no unsuitable thought. The deduction of works from faith is also not contradicted by the statement of ver. 22, that faith is perfected by works. Any conviction is strengthened in the very act of living up to it, and certainly the faith of Abraham reached its perfection when he was able to offer in sacrifice to God the dearest that he had on earth. The passage ii. 26 ("as the body without the soul is dead, so also faith without works is dead") would give a different and almost contrary relation of faith and works, if works in it were conceived as the soul of faith. That would not be a co-ordinating of two powers, independent and only capable of being united, for body and soul do not first exist independently beside one another, in order then to enter into union; but faith as the more active would rather proceed from works than works from the living faith. But James cannot have thought that, because it would directly contradict ver. 18. If faith is not recognisable in itself, but first becomes visible by works, then it cannot possibly be thought of as the visible, the body, and works as the invisible, the soul. But this comparison, which is not to be overstrained, can only mean, as a body without a soul is a corpse, so is faith without moral proof; it lacks the living impulse which gives it practical worth. Thus James, in conformity with the whole character of his doctrinal system, conceived works in true Christian fashion as the practical proofs of the new life which God has begotten in Christian men, and which they must not allow to die in them again. But his conception of faith hangs between the Old and New Testament, it is partly Christian and partly universal in its religious character; and whilst he recognises, what he has learnt from life, that it may be living or dead, active or merely passive, he from the first excluded the idea that it should have such absolute value assigned to it as it has in Paul's world of thought, where it appears as the foundation of justification.

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## CHAPTER V

## JUSTIFICATION

## § 1. THE CONCEPT JUSTIFICATION IN GENERAL

The Epistle of James, in the famous passage ii. 14–26, bases justification on faith and works, and so suggests a contradiction, and even an intentional contradiction, to the Pauline teaching, and a polemic against the author of the Epistle to the Romans. In so far as this appearance rests on the bare idea of justification in itself, it is removed by a history of that idea. It is not in its origin peculiarly Pauline, but is a common possession of the Old and New Testament. The word δικαιοῦν, רְאִים, describes in the Old Testament the action of a judge who declares a man innocent, and so the word *justify* in the so-called forensic sense, as borrowed from legal speech, has become a current expression for acquittal; it is a declaration of innocence, especially it is the sentence of God acquitting or justifying a man in His judgment. It cannot therefore be in the least surprising to find the expression in the mouth of James, since it is in no way the peculiar possession of Paul. The Jewish theology of the synagogue makes frequent use of it,<sup>1</sup> and it was well known to the primitive Church, all the more as that Church, convinced of the near approach of the Messianic day of judgment, was led to discuss with greater eagerness the alternatives of the καταδικάζεσθαι or δικαιοῦσθαι on that day (Matt. xii. 37).<sup>2</sup> But in the usage of the Old Testament two possible senses appear. He who is

<sup>1</sup> Weber, in his *Altsynagogalen Theologie*, proves that.

<sup>2</sup> It is, notwithstanding, a favourite objection to our whole conception of the Epistle of James, that it is improbable, and cannot be proved that the primitive Christianity before Paul spoke of justification by faith, or by faith and works. This is an *argumentum e silentio* of the most sorry kind. What do we know at all of the doctrinal and religious speech of pre-Pauline Christendom? The Epistle of James either is a pre-Pauline writing, and then this one development of pre-Pauline Church history attests that that notion was current among Christians before Paul, or it is not a pre-Pauline document, and then there exists no document at all which can bear witness to the pre-Pauline usage of Christendom.

really righteous may be recognised as such, as when an innocent man is acquitted before the judgment-seat, or when God in His righteousness is recognised by man, or when a really righteous pious man receives God's recognition as such. But an unrighteous man may also be acquitted, that is, declared righteous, justified by a judge, for example, who allows himself to be bribed (cf. Ex. xxiii. 7, LXX.: *οὐ δικαιώσεις τὸν ἀτέβη ἔνεκεν δώρων*); or by a king who pardons a guilty man, and by that act of grace justifies him; or by God, who, letting grace come before righteousness, declares a sinner just. And in this twofold sense of a *justificatio justi* and a *justificatio injusti*, the notion *δικαιοῦν*, *δικαιοῦσθαι* found its application in the New Testament. The first is the common; when Jesus, in Matt. xii. 37, says, *ἐκ γὰρ τῶν λόγων σου δικαιωθήσῃ, καὶ ἐκ τῶν λόγων σου καταδικασθήσῃ*, the reference is to a *justificatio justi*—if thy words have been really good, thou wilt be justified on the ground of them; and if they have been evil, thou wilt be condemned on the ground of them. The words in the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican approximate to the notion of a *justificatio injusti*: *κατέβη οὗτος δεδικασμένος εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ παρ' ἐκείνον* (Luke xviii. 14). Yet even here, as the note of comparison shows, the emphasis is not so much upon the fact that a sinner was pardoned, as that the publican, humbling himself before God, was really, in virtue of his conversion, more righteous before God than the proud impenitent Pharisee. And so the main idea, according to the simpler and more natural reading, is that of *justificatio justi*; this is a statement of the standard of justice. If thus it should appear that James follows this view, and that Paul in his peculiar doctrine of salvation gives religious form to the other and more artificial application of the notion of justification, we must recognise in James the source of the primitive thought on the subject before Paul. It was undoubtedly more natural for a religion, which, like Judaism, endeavoured to obtain the favour of God by means of a righteousness of works, to speak of a *δικαιοῦσθαι* in the religious sense, in the sense of the *justificatio justi*, than in that of *justificatio injusti*; and even primitive Christianity, in its endeavour to reach moral *τελειότης* (Matt. v. 18) and future salvation by observance of the righteousness which Jesus

had taught in the Sermon on the Mount, could not start from any other meaning or usage. The word δικαιοῦν, even to Paul, where he does not develop his peculiar doctrine of grace, is familiar only in the sense of the *justificatio justi* (cf. Rom. ii. 13; 1 Cor. iv. 4).

### § 2. JAMES' DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION

The doctrine of James is most simply comprised in the statement of ii. 24 : Ὁράτε, ὅτι ἐξ ἔργων δικαιούται ἀνθρώπος, καὶ οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως μόνον. The μόνον indicates that faith also belongs to justification ; that it co-operates with works in respect of it (ii. 22). And we cannot conceive anything other than this from the nature of the works which justify before God ; works which do not result from faith, that is, from a religious basis, could not, for that very reason, justify anyone. In the same way, we cannot conceive anything else as regards faith itself ; for how could a man without faith, an unbelieving man, please God ? (cf. Heb. xi. 6). But James most emphatically denies justifying power to faith alone, faith without works (ii. 14) ; for that is not a living, but a dead faith, and as such, of course, useless, ineffectual, ἀργή in respect to justification, that is, in presenting man in God's eyes as righteous (ii. 20). It may now be asked, in what moment or stage of the Christian life does James place this divine justification by faith and works ? He cannot have placed it in the beginning of the Christian profession, for then the young faith has had no possibility of proving and exhibiting itself in works. There lies rather in the idea of a justification by works—works in the sense of James—that the conclusion is drawn from the completed life, and the two Old Testament examples of Abraham and Rahab, adduced by James, show that this was also his idea. The justification of Abraham, of which he speaks (ii. 21), takes place after the offering of Isaac, after the last and greatest proof of love for God in the life of the patriarch, which in the Scripture narrative falls also tolerably near the end of his history. And the justification of Rahab immediately precedes the judgment of God upon Jericho, a symbol of the divine judgment of the world. If we add that, according to ii. 14, δικαιοῦσθαι is to

James synonymous with *σώζεσθαι*, and that *σώζεσθαι* almost throughout, in Paul even, is conceived as taking place in the future at the final judgment (cf. Rom. v. 9, viii. 24), then we are forced to recognise that this justifying judgment of God meant by James is the divine final judgment. Not that James directly understood by *δικαιοῦσθαι* the acquittal by God at the last day, the statement *ὅτι ἐξ ἔργων δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος, καὶ οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως μόνον* in its present tense is too indefinite and general for that; he meant that judgment of complacency which God forms to Himself about the life of a pious man spent in His sight, on which He will, in His own time, base His final decision. That the final decision will not be made on the basis of a man's mere faith, but on the basis of his works, of having done or not done the will of God, is the simple and emphatic teaching of Jesus Himself, which no one can expect James to disavow. "Not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father in heaven" (Matt. vii. 21; cf. vv. 23-27). But it is also the teaching of the Apostle Paul, who nowhere makes the final and saving decision of God follow on mere faith, but on the doing of the divine will, on the completed sanctification (Rom. ii. 13; 2 Cor. v. 10; 1 Thess. v. 23, etc.). If James thus teaches that God, in order to recognise a man ultimately as righteous, and to let him stand as such in His final judgment (*σῶσαι*, ii. 14), takes into consideration, not merely his faith, but also his works, that is, his life and walk, he has both Scripture and reason on his side, and there is nothing in his doctrine either to surprise or raise question. There is only one main point that can perplex, and which has given the main occasion for attributing to James a polemic against Rom. iv.—a polemic that would be excessively clumsy—viz. that James appeals for his doctrine of justification by faith and works to the example of Abraham, which, according to the wording of Gen. xv. 6, rather favours the opinion he contests of a *δικαιοῦσθαι ἐκ πίστεως μόνον*; and he appeals to this example with the passages of Scripture in his mind, as is shown by ver. 23. But this surprise disappears when we consider that James, as ver. 21 undoubtedly shows, starts from a quite definite traditional representation about Abraham in which his readers

shared, and which he can therefore hold up to them as an axiom, and by which also his comprehension and exposition of the apparently opposing passage (Gen. xv. 6) are conditioned. In spite of the saying, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness," the firm Jewish conviction was that Abraham had God's favour, not merely on account of his faith, but also, as an actual righteous and pious man, on account of his walk, his works, and especially on account of that unsurpassable deed of obedience, the offering of his son. Abraham, says the First Book of Maccabees ii. 52, offered his son, and God counted that to him for righteousness. From this view, common to him and his readers, he can plead to them, "Was not then Abraham our father justified by works when he had offered his son Isaac upon the altar?" He thinks of the promise of God, connected in the Old Testament narrative with this very deed of Abraham, and whilst he cannot, of course, leave unmentioned the apparently contradictory passage xv. 6, he can harmonise it with his view and teaching. He notes the necessary co-operation of faith and works, and the way in which works come in to perfect faith (ver. 22), and he brings in harmony by taking the words of Gen. xv. 6 as a provisional or prophetic declaration which can only be fulfilled when Abraham's faith is perfected in the work of offering Isaac.

### § 3. JAMES AND PAUL

Now, if this is James' doctrine of justification, in what relation does it stand to that of Paul? Not, at anyrate, in that of a polemic. For James has a different conception, not only of works but of faith and justification, from that which Paul has when he teaches that man is justified by God through faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, and so a polemic on the part of James against Paul would be a beating of the air, the most complete misunderstanding that could be imagined. But it is quite inconceivable that the historical James, to whom, according to Gal. ii., Paul explained his preaching of the gospel, and who declared himself in harmony with it and gave him the right hand of fellowship, should have cherished such a misunderstanding. And even

if we assume a psuedo-James as author of the Epistle, and make him contend, not against the actual, but against a misunderstood and degenerate Paulinism, we do not improve the case. It certainly is hard to conceive that the peculiar doctrine of the Apostle to the Gentiles should have entered and been perverted within exclusive and unmixedly Jewish-Christian circles. But in such a case one would expect from the polemic that it should distinguish between real and misunderstood Paulinism of which there is no trace in our Epistle. If we assume a polemic directed against the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, we have to decide that the example of Abraham, turned specially to account in these Epistles, was applied in a contrary sense by James. But James amply shows by the example of Rahab, which Paul does not mention, that he did not borrow his examples from the Pauline Epistles. Surely the example of Abraham, whom his people honoured as the friend of God on account of his virtues, might have been suggested without the example of Paul, more readily than that of Rahab. Above all, the way in which he introduces the example of Abraham (ver. 21) as an unquestioned and unquestionable proof for his own doctrine, makes the assumption of a polemical reference to Rom. iv. absolutely impossible, for no reasonable man would quote a disputed case as conclusively establishing his point. But there is not even an objective conflict between the Pauline and Jacobean doctrine; both forms of teaching exist peacefully beside each other. James manifestly contemplated justification in the simple and most natural sense of *justificatio justi*, as the divine recognition of an actually righteous man (for he acknowledges that there are such as is shown by ver. 16), and he thought of it as the final judgment of God upon a man who is to stand in the last judgment and become a partaker of the final *σωτηρία*. Paul also, as already noted, demands as a requisite for this last judgment and the final *σωτηρία*, right works, the love that fulfils the law, and the perfected sanctification, but he (except in Rom. ii. 13) does not apply the expression *δικαιοῦσθαι* to the final judgment of God, which recognises this righteousness of life as actual. He applies it rather to that first sentence of God with which He graciously receives the

believing sinner returning to Him, and takes him into fellowship with Himself, that is, he takes the notion of justification in the sense of the *justificatio injusti* (Rom. iv. 5, δικαιοῦντα τὸν ἀσεβῆ), and thus refers it to the first moment of the Christian profession, to the forgiveness of sin which establishes the standing of the believer in grace.

Now as James undoubtedly taught with the first apostles that whoever believeth in Christ and is baptized receives forgiveness of his sins (Acts ii. 38, iii. 19, x. 43), though the expression justification for this act of forgiveness might have been strange to him, he would not in anyway have contested the Pauline idea of a justification by grace on account of faith; he would simply have insisted that works must follow (cf. Acts xv. 11). The distinction of James' and Paul's doctrine is thus a purely formal one, but as such is certainly not without significance. In the first place, it is clear how much nearer the doctrine of James is in point of form to Jesus' own doctrine, how much more primitive it is than the Pauline, which, with a bold stroke, makes δικαιοῦν τὸν ἀσεβῆ, which was forbidden to the judge in the Old Testament, the expression of God's right to put grace before justice and to justify sinners. For that very reason, however, James' doctrine of justification is the more imperfect and unsatisfying in point of form. It cannot be doubted, that if we take the doctrine of James in its strict literalness, only the man who is perfect in his works (i. 4) could reckon on God's favour. And if, on the one hand, we all offend in many things (iii. 2), while, on the other, he who keeps the whole law and offends in one point is guilty of all (ii. 9), it appears as if no man can stand in that future judgment which is to take place according to the perfect law of liberty (ii. 12). But that is not James' meaning. He knows of a forgiveness of sin, not merely when a man becomes a Christian, but also within the Christian life, a forgiveness that is ever new and plenteous (v. 15, 20), for God is very pitiful and of tender mercy (v. 11), and the merciful shall also in his judgment obtain mercy (ii. 13). But this doctrine of pardon is in no way formally introduced into that doctrine of justice and of judgment, just because Christ and Christ's cross have not yet become to James the central point of his doctrine. He is

satisfied, after the manner of the Old Testament, to derive the forgiveness of sin immediately from God, and to connect it with the conversion of the sinner (v. 20); he seeks for an understanding of that saving act of God which is peculiar to the New Testament, in virtue of which God can bring to the believer in Christ the assurance of an infinite forgiveness, because in the same Christ is the guarantee for the perfect sanctification of those who believe on Him. It is entirely different in the case of Paul, who finds in Christ's death the source both of the pardon and the renewal of the man; Paul is therefore able to show us how God, without any self-contradiction, can justify the ungodly who believes, and yet can at last demand of him a perfect righteousness not imputed, but bestowed and made his own.

## CHAPTER VI

## THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

## § 1. LOVE OF GOD AND CONTEMPT FOR THE WORLD

James' doctrinal account of Christianity is thus an imperfect one; but all the more distinctly marked is the ideal of Christian life as it appears in his exhortations, which are urged with the greatest moral earnestness, and was evidently realised to some extent in his own character. Certainly this ideal of life is characteristic of an individual, or perhaps rather of a class. It is the ideal of one of the "quiet in the land," one of the pious poor of Israel, who before he was a Christian had lived by what in the Old Testament piety was most closely related to the gospel, and consequently, even after he had found in Christianity the fulfilment of his longings and a complete inner freedom, could remain on the peaceful boundary line of the Old and New Testament. That earnest and unforced love of God which saw in Him the highest and the only true good, so that the heart was not divided between God and the world, was for James and the best of his readers the fundamental fact in personal religion, just as Jesus Himself had taught (i. 12, ii. 5, iv. 4). In

this disposition James calls it believing to prize only the eternal blessings, and doubting to waver between them and the temporal blessings (i. 6, 7, ii. 4). In this disposition he demands of his readers that they hold the miseries and vexations of the earthly existence for pure joy, because through the trial of faith is produced that brave patience, that endurance which overcomes the world, and makes them worthy of the eternal crown of victory (i. 2, 12). And, in the same spirit, there is rooted in him that noble pride which will not bend before riches and the power connected with them, but, in the high consciousness of being rich in God, treats rich and poor with the same independence and kindness (ii. 1-9). Poverty as such is not made a virtue and riches a sin, nor is asceticism and the outward flight from the world preached. Our Epistle shows no trace of this spirit which was already mighty in the second century. It is in the Christianity of personal sanctification, of active brotherly love and patient hope, that that fundamental disposition of love for God manifests itself.

## § 2. SANCTIFICATION AND ITS MEANS

The idea of sanctification meets us in two forms: negatively, as a demand to keep oneself unspotted from the world (i. 27), and positively, as the task of becoming perfect and complete, lacking nothing (i. 4). Of course this goal is not to be reached without an ever-renewed repentance and conversion; man, by nature inclined to yield to his lusts and passions and to be the friend of the world, has to turn himself ever more completely from the world to God. "Submit yourselves to God," cries James in this sense to his readers (iv. 7); but "resist the devil,—the world-spirit, who provokes and allures you,—and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands,—namely, for prayer,—ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of God, and He will lift you up." The fundamental mood, however, of the Christian, which must grow out of this submission to God, and which forms the presupposition of any

positive growth in sanctification, is *πραΰτης* (i. 21, iii. 13); this is not so much meekness towards men, as quietness before God; the meekness which, as the contrary of *ἀργύρι*, all restless, excited, passionate frames of mind, enables the man at all times to listen to the voice of God, and allows himself to be guided by His word and will. Not that James by this meekness, which was manifestly a favourite idea of the "quiet in the land" (cf. Matt. v. 4, xi. 29), meant a purely passionless and will-less piety; on it he rested an active spontaneous life in God, a life in prayer, in the word of God, in the doing of the divine will. All moods of mind and experiences of life were to drive the Christian to intercourse with God. "If any man suffer, it is said (v. 13), let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms." Even the earthly necessities of life may be prayed for, though not from covetousness and longing for enjoyment (iv. 3). And the prayer to which brotherly love and compassion for a brother's need in soul or body impels, has its own great promise: "The prayer of a righteous man availeth much, if it is earnest," it is said (v. 16–18), with reference to what Elijah accomplished by his prayer. But the Christian has most of all to ask God for wisdom from above, for the heavenly light of His Spirit, which, in the darkness of his misery and temptations, will show him the right way, and grant him the power of perseverance. Therefore, in i. 5, immediately after the exhortation to see in the manifold temptations so many instruments for the trial of faith and means of inner perfection, it is said: "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." And, further, the life of the Christian is an active life in the word of God. This word, which was once planted in his heart, in his second birth, and which is able to save his soul, filling it with the powers of eternal life, he needs and desires to appropriate ever afresh in meekness, in a quiet collected frame of mind, whilst he puts away everything of an ungodly nature (i. 21). And he does this not as a forgetful hearer, who only looks for a moment at this glass of self-knowledge, he steeps himself in the divine word in order to live and move in it, and in this way he receives strong and constant incitements to the doing of it (i. 22–25). In thus doing the divine will, and, if need

be, suffering under it with joy and patience, personal Christianity on earth reaches its goal of peace. "He who is not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word, shall be blessed in his doing" (i. 25). His whole life then is a continuous worship of God in spirit and in truth. "Pure and undefiled worship before God the Father," it is said (i. 27), "is to visit the widows and fatherless in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." That is a contrast, quite in the prophetic style, to the Pharisaic manner of regarding oneself as religious and pious, although one does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart (that is, deceives himself about his heart).

### § 3. WARNING AGAINST SINS OF THE TONGUE

This Christianity of the heart and of active love is opposed also to the pious and impious talk too largely prevailing among his readers. It may be a feature in James, characteristic of pre-Christian times, that he, like the "quiet in the land," values silence more than speech; the golden rule of life (i. 19) sounds like a saying of the proverbial wisdom before Christ: "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." But this pious inclination, which was perhaps the result of training, had been deepened in him and become a Christian virtue. The mastery of the tongue appears to him the most decisive proof of Christian sanctification; this little member, which is yet so powerful, appears to him, after profound observation of his talkative, quarrelsome, murmuring, swearing, cursing people, the most untamed of all. "If any man," he exclaims, "offend not in word, he is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body" (iii. 2). And again, "Every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: but the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison" (iii. 7, 8). There are special kinds of the abuse of speech which he chiefly condemns. Above all, murmuring, slandering, judging, cursing, which he regards as outbreaks of lovelessness towards our neighbour, are in his view sins of the tongue, and he felt it was hypocrisy at the same time with the same tongue to praise God. "Therewith bless

we God, even the Father ; and therewith curse we men, who are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. Doth a fountain send forth from the same opening sweet water and bitter ? " (iii. 9-11). In another passage he deals with swearing in order to forbid it entirely among Christians, just as Jesus does in the Sermon on the Mount ; he manifestly regards it as opposed to the Christian duty of truthfulness. " Above all things, my brethren, swear not ; neither by heaven, nor by earth, nor by any oath : but let your yea be yea ; and your nay, nay ; lest ye fall into condemnation " (v. 12). Again he forbids the speech of arrogance, which claims for itself the future, without thinking of God the Lord of our life. " Go to now, ye that say, To-day, or to-morrow, we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain ; ye who know not what shall be on the morrow " (iv. 13, 14). The Christian knows that his life is a fleeting vapour, and that in every hour of it he is in God's hands ; if he knows that and does not act accordingly, he sins (iv. 14-17). But it is remarkable that James also dissuades from much discussion of the faith, and from thrusting oneself forward as a teacher of the Church (iii. 1). Manifestly he regards this as encroaching on quiet hearing and then on patient doing of the word by his readers ; he saw that the desire for controversy and quarrelling and contention go hand in hand with teaching, and so he looked upon this zeal for teaching as connected with *όργη*. For just as the quiet and reverent hearing of the divine word, and the quietness of temper, or *παύτης*, are mutually dependent ; so, on the other hand, the ambitious desire to become a teacher, the many and thoughtless words generally, are connected with the *όργη*, the excited and passionate frame of mind, which fails to do that which is right before God (i. 20), because it is not able to give attention to God's word and will. A special wisdom may indeed appear to be shown in speaking and teaching ; but if it goes with bitter envying and strife, it is not " the wisdom that cometh from above ; but earthly, sensual, devilish." The true wisdom that cometh from above is " first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy " (iii. 17). " And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that

make peace" (iii. 18): in quarrels and contentions it does not thrive. Thus the theme of faith and works returns here in another form, and one understands how James can compare a compassion, which finds utterance in mere words, to faith without works (ii. 16, 17). Not the much and eager discussion of the faith, but the quiet doing of that which flows from it, is the proof of its genuineness and acceptableness with God. "Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge? let him show out of a good conversation; let him show in the meekness, which is the mark of the true wisdom, his good works" (iii. 13). That is a concise summary of the practical Christianity of the Sermon on the Mount as taught by James.

#### § 4. THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

These exhortations to peacefulness show that James in his commendation of silence has no wish to train anchorites. The Christian community is throughout the presupposition of his words, and we get a glimpse of the simplest and most original Church order. The poor believers in Christ form separate conventicles within the Jewish synagogue: they have their own synagogue (ii. 1), in which they now and then receive a visit from their unbelieving countrymen, rich and poor. The duty, then, is to manifest kindness without distinction, according to the royal law of love to one's neighbour (ii. 8, 9). There are elders who have to care for the suffering and the sick, but what they can do, can and should be done by all for each other (v. 14-16). Teaching in the Church is as yet bound to no official order, but falls to everyone, only everyone should remember the great responsibility it involves (iii. 1). The miraculous gift of healing the sick still continues in the Church; just as the Twelve, when they were sent out by Jesus, were to anoint the sick with oil as a symbol of the miraculous healing which they invoked upon them in His name (Mark vi. 13); so the elders were to anoint the sick with oil, and pray over them, that the Lord may raise them up and forgive their sins (v. 13, 14). But the whole Church has the office of mutual pastoral care and loving service; it is a part of worship to take an interest in the fatherless and widows in their affliction; all are to pray for one another,

especially in cases of sickness, that they may be healed (v. 16). They are to confess their sins one to another, in order to help one another to conversion and forgiveness. For, and this is the great closing exhortation and promise of the Epistle, "He who converteth one of the Church who has erred from the truth, is to know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins," that is, shall bring to him the divine forgiveness (v. 20). Thus amid circumstances of decline, which we cannot imagine to have affected the whole Church though the Epistle is exclusively occupied with them, there shines out the apostolic ideal of the true Church of brethren, in which office belongs to all, and the one law is active, protecting, interceding, and saving love for the brethren.

### § 5. THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

This personal and social Christianity, finally, has its stimulus in the hope of the nearness of the day of the Lord. That looking to the future which prevails in the faith of the earliest period is very strongly marked throughout our Epistle. In the very first chapter there is set before the rich man a picture of his swift and sudden destruction; just as in the Holy Land the flower of the meadow withers under the blaze of the sun, so will he fade away in his ways (i. 10, 11). And in the fifth chapter this announcement of judgment rises to a truly prophetic height. The God-forgotten rich, though they do not belong to the readers, are yet addressed, or rather are thundered at in vivid pictures, just as Tyre and Sidon or Babylon are in the old prophets. Their sins are held up before them as at the judgment day of God, and the frightful destruction that awaits them is pictured as close at hand, or even as if it had already come. "Your riches are corrupted, your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall eat your flesh as it were fire. You have heaped treasure together for the last days. You have nourished your heart, as in a day of slaughter. The coming of the Lord draweth nigh; the Judge standeth at the door" (v. 2, 3, 5, 8, 9). If this announcement of judgment was

not fulfilled in the way James imagined, it still found abundant fulfilment in the fearful days of the Jewish insurrection, with its butcheries, and in the Syrian diaspora. But that which is the day of wrath and terror to the godless rich, is the day of hope and redemption to the pious poor. Their cries have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth; and as the husbandman waits patiently for the early and the latter rain, that it may bless his sowing and produce the precious fruits of the earth, so should they wait for the day of the Lord, which will reward their sufferings and patience (v. 7, 8). These consolations show that James had before him among his readers not merely a declining and degenerate Christianity, notwithstanding that he finds it necessary, as Jesus did once in the case of His disciples, to bridle the impatient expectations of the pious among his readers, and prevent the danger of discouragement. Take, he cries to them, the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord for an example of suffering and affliction and of patience—a word of comfort which reminds us of Jesus' own words (Matt. v. 12): “Beloved, we count them happy which endure: ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy” (v. 11). “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he hath been tried, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him” (i. 12). That, then, is the teaching of James, whom we have learned to know above as a pillar of the primitive Church, and the representative of an evangelical Jewish Christianity, as contrasted with the Pauline Gentile Christianity. Along with the sketches of Peter's gospel preaching which we have in the Book of Acts, it illustrates for us how the Church of that time was taught in gospel and in duty. Certainly James had to drop many Old Testament views which veiled the truth, and to look more deeply into the New Testament mystery of salvation. But no one can dispute that even from his point of view he was able to produce and to establish a true and full Christianity. And so the Epistle of James has its providential place in our New Testament, in illustrating to us how the full vigour of Christian life may be united with elementary dogmatic perceptions, and in reminding us

that full rights of citizenship in the Christian Church belong not only to a Pauline Christianity, but also to one formed after the manner of James.

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### *III. THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER*

#### CHAPTER I

##### INTRODUCTORY

###### **§ 1. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO EPISTLES OF PETER**

Next to the Epistle of James, there are two Epistles of Peter in the New Testament which, if they could be regarded as genuine, would supplement our view of the original apostolic mode of teaching, and especially would give evidence of a freer development of it, such as the Acts of the Apostles would lead us to expect from Peter in comparison with James. The second of these two Epistles has been much disputed even in Christian antiquity, and in point of fact, as will be shown later on, it bears all the marks of a spurious writing. In the first, however, Christian antiquity unanimously saw a genuine work of the Apostle Peter, and even the more recent criticism up to Baur was not on the whole unfavourable to it. The criticism of the present, which regards every traditional view with so much scepticism, and every negative hypothesis with so much credulity, seeks to disprove its genuineness also. We may be allowed to indicate briefly why this judgment cannot satisfy us, and cannot hinder us from treating the Epistle here as a genuine Petrine monument in the course of our historical considerations.

###### **§ 2. MARKS OF GENUINENESS IN THE FIRST EPISTLE**

The First Epistle of Peter presents itself as a letter of comfort and advice to a circle of Churches specially oppressed at the time (i. 6, iii. 14 f., iv. 1, 12, 16, 19, v. 8-10).

These Churches are found in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, that is, partly in the region of Paul's early mission, and, as is shown by the phrase, *οἱ ποτὲ οὐ λαός* in ii. 10, as well as the backward glance at former idolatry and heathen vices renounced in the passage iv. 3, are essentially of heathen origin.<sup>1</sup> It is not a formal and official persecution with which they are visited, but social pressure and an outbreak of hostile public opinion. The Christian communities were in great part composed of classes already oppressed, of women and slaves (ii. 18, iii. 1), and had thus become the objects of evil rumours and prejudices (ii. 15, iii. 16, iv. 4). These features do not all suit, as has been confidently maintained, the time of Trajan, of whose orderly judicial procedure against the Christians there is no trace, but they do harmonise with the time of Nero, in which Tacitus expressly bears witness to that popular prejudice against the Christians. The cruel measures of the emperor against the Christians of the capital do not appear to have been imitated by the officials of the provinces; but, as was natural, and as we see from the apocalyptic letters, these persecutions encouraged the animosity of the surrounding Jews and heathen, and thus made the already insecure position of the Christians a position of real hardship. According to v. 12, our Epistle was occasioned by a journey of Sylvanus, the old travelling companion of Paul (Acts xv. 22, 40), to those regions of Asia Minor, and, according to v. 13, it appears to have been written from Rome, and directly under the impression of the Neronic persecution. The words are indeed "at Babylon," but the phrase, "those chosen together with you in Babylon salute you," makes us look for a metaphorical meaning of this designation of peace in connection with the metaphorical designation of the saluting Church. The designation of Rome as the New Testament Babylon, which runs through our

<sup>1</sup> Weiss advocates the contrary view, and at the same time places the Epistle in the pre-Pauline age. Though I expressed agreement with this view some years ago in a review of Weiss' doctrinal system of Peter, I must now dissent from it, and pray that I be no longer quoted as holding it. I have long been convinced of the untenability of Weiss' conception of the Epistle, and regard the existence of a pre-Pauline Jewish Christian Church, stretching from Pontus to Bithynia and Asia, as a historical absurdity.

Apocalypse, had undoubtedly become current far and near among the Christians from the time of Nero's cruel treatment of them there. That Peter found himself at Rome in those days, and finally suffered martyrdom under Nero, is an old and credible tradition,<sup>1</sup> and therefore all historical probabilities unite in suggesting that it was he who, induced by the journey of Sylvanus, and probably by some earlier relations with these Churches in Asia Minor, felt himself constrained to send them this letter of encouragement. The personal traces in the letter only serve to strengthen that probability. In strong contrast with the premeditation of the second spurious Epistle, the name of the apostle is mentioned only in the simplest way (i. 1), and reference made to his having been an eye-witness of the sufferings of Christ only in the passage v. 1, and without any further object. The phrase used (i. 8), "Christ, whom, having not seen, ye love," is most naturally explained as the involuntary expression of one who has seen Him, and the passage i. 3, "Blessed be God, the Father of all mercy, who hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead," strikes the reader as having the tone of jubilation over the event of Easter which would be in a heart awakened by it to a new life out of the death of despair. In other respects, also, the Epistle contains features of the first Christian age. The expectation of the immediate return of the Lord is uninterrupted (iv. 6, 7, 17), and the constitution of the Church is so primitive that the notion of the *πρεσβύτεροι* (v. 1, 5) still wavers between the official and the natural sense, in which latter they are contrasted with the *νεώτεροι*, as in Acts v. 6, 10. Add to all this that no motive can be discovered for the false attribution of the Epistle, and that the apostolic dignity and eye-witness of Peter are not brought forward to support any particular doctrine in it, we can thus say that the critics ought to consider well before they contradict, in the case of such a document, the unanimous judgment of antiquity.

<sup>1</sup> A tradition in which even Weizsäcker (*Apostolic Age*) believes on the evidence of the well-known passage of Clement of Rome.

### § 3. ANSWER TO CERTAIN OBJECTIONS

As to the reasons urged against its genuineness, the remark of Holtzmann has perhaps the greatest plausibility: "It is inconceivable that the fundamental notions of the synoptic preaching of Jesus, the kingdom of God, the Son of Man, etc., should have been entirely lost, that the law should have vanished from his horizon, and that the earthly appearance of Jesus should have given place to reflections on His death which were not due to his own impression, but to Isa. liii." That all that must have been lost to him, and fallen into the background, is a bold conclusion to draw from the silence of a document of eight pages, and of definitely practical aims. We perceive throughout that the apostles did not so much fasten upon the separate doctrinal ideas of Jesus as upon His whole appearance and the conclusion of His life in its relation to the Old Testament. We should think that the personal impression of the Christ suffering in ideal patience was sufficiently plain in ii. 21-23, and that the citing of Isa. liii., the Old Testament passage which was above all fitted to remove for the apostle the offence of the cross, is conceivable enough in the case of Peter, seeing that it agrees well with the testimony of the Acts of the Apostles about the earliest christological view. Moreover, if one sought as diligently in the First Epistle of Peter for echoes of Christ's own words as for echoes of Pauline passages, one would find a considerable number.<sup>1</sup> All else that is urged against the genuineness of the Epistle consists in the reproach that it is dependent on other New Testament Epistles, especially Romans, Ephesians, and James. First of all, we should have to determine the exact measure of these alleged borrowings. For our part we must admit that we can form no idea of the mental condition of an early Christian writer, whether Peter or any other, who, in order to say to his readers, "reward not evil with evil," or in order to avail himself of the phrase, "for conscience' sake," must go and borrow from another.<sup>2</sup> And of this stamp are most of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. i. 6 with Mark v. 12; i. 8 with Job xx. 19; i. 13 with Luke xii. 35; ii. 7 with Matt. xxi. 42; iii. 9 with Luke vi. 28; iii. 14 with Matt. v. 10, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Holtzmann, *Einleitung ins N. T.* p. 488.

alleged borrowings. But while there are real echoes of Pauline or Jacobean utterances, there is, on the other hand, unquestionable independence of the whole mode of teaching either of Paul or of James. And it may be asked whether such marks of affinity, along with a marked individuality, do not excellently harmonise with the later Peter. According to Gal. i.-ii., Acts xv., Peter was spiritually in close touch with James on the one hand and with Paul on the other, and took a certain middle position between the two. That the scene narrated in Gal. ii. 12 f. permanently estranged him from Paul and drove him back into a narrow-hearted Jewish Christianity, can only be supposed by a criticism which thinks very meanly of the ability of a disciple of Jesus to submit to a fellow apostle when he tells him the truth. The respectful way in which Paul repeatedly refers to him in the First Epistle to the Corinthians (iii. 22, ix. 5, xv. 5) rather attests the continued brotherly relation. That Peter's mission circle became ever wider (cf. 1 Cor. ix. 5, *περιάγειν*), that he was specially attracted to the Roman Church, which in all probability sprang from the intercourse between Jerusalem and Rome, and was from the beginning under a Petrine influence, has recently been considered probable even by Weizsäcker.<sup>1</sup> Now, if he esteemed James as well as Paul, and put value on spiritual sympathy with them, what is more natural than that he should take cognisance of the letters which the one or the other sent here and there, and perhaps even possessed copies of them? And if he appeared in Rome soon after the death of Paul, hastening to the help of the cruelly persecuted Roman Church, how very likely it is that he should read with reverence the precious legacy which this Church possessed in the Epistle to the Romans? Nay, it may even be supposed that this man, unaccustomed to writing, would regard this and that letter of his friend directly as a model when he proposed to himself the task of writing to aid far off and afflicted Churches. No doubt all that might be supposed just as well of any later Pauline Christian who had arrogated to himself the name of Peter. But such a one would have done more; even though he had not understood the fundamental views of the Pauline system, he would have

<sup>1</sup> Weizsäcker, *Apostolic Age*, p. 487.

used its dogmatic watchwords, which confessedly are entirely wanting in our Epistle. The independence and peculiarity of our Epistle, which far outweigh the traces of relationship with Paul and James, and the combination of independence and relation, point directly to an apostolic colleague rather than to a post-apostolic successor; for to say that the post-apostolic and Paulinising author has in this Epistle "allowed the Pauline dogmatic theories to drop,"<sup>1</sup> explains nothing. On the contrary, if the mode of thought and teaching lying before us in the Epistle show a simpler and more undeveloped character than the Pauline, if they hold that middle position between the Pauline and Jacobean methods which the historical Peter, according to Gal. ii., Acts xv., actually held, and if, besides, they exhibit throughout a relationship with the preaching of Peter in the Acts of the Apostles, then all signs that may be fairly required unite in favour of a genuine Petrine origin of our Epistle.

#### § 4. THE DOCTRINAL PECULIARITY OF THE EPISTLE

In point of fact, the doctrinal character of our Epistle is just of this kind. It is quite what we must have expected from the Peter of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles after he had exchanged opinions with Paul, and passed through the further school of experience. The Old and New Testaments do not appear here in any relation of opposition or compromise any more than in the Petrine discourses of the Acts of the Apostles; they are seen as prediction and fulfilment. The only distinction between the author and James on this point is, that he finds the centre of gravity of the Old Testament to lie, not in the law, but in the prophets (cf. i. 10–12, ii. 6, 22–25). We have manifestly here a man who has not passed over to the gospel like James by spiritualising the law, but—just as we must imagine Peter in the Gospel history—one who from the beginning has sought and found in Jesus Him of whom Moses and the prophets wrote (John i. 45), the fulfiller of the Messianic hopes. This accounts for what further distinguishes our Epistle from that of James, that the

<sup>1</sup> So Pfleiderer, *Urchristenthum*, p. 600.

person and history of Jesus are thrown here into much bolder relief. That is natural in the case of a personal disciple of Jesus, who, in the full sense of the word, lived through everything, while James still stood at a distance from it; especially do we feel from the Epistle, as already mentioned, the impression which the suffering and resurrection of Jesus left upon the author. That the teaching office of Jesus is not expressly mentioned, as it is in the sermon to Cornelius, can only be accidental, and is connected with the fact that he has not in view, as he had there, a missionary discourse in which he must start from the very foundation, but an exhortation and strengthening of already instructed Christians. For the author's doctrine of the regenerating power of the gospel reminds us, even more than Jas. i. 18, of Jesus' Parable of the Sower (i. 23), and the remarkable doctrine of the preaching of Jesus to the departed spirits (iii. 19, iv. 6), traces back the deliverance of these spirits in the same way to the power of His word. In this very doctrine of the going of Jesus to the dead, in order to preach to them, we have an entirely peculiar element of our Epistle, which, however, as we shall see, agrees most thoroughly with the universalistic character, which is more and more developed in the case of the Peter of the Acts of the Apostles. The most important point on which the Epistle goes beyond the early Petrine preaching of the Acts of the Apostles comes out in the consideration of the death of Christ, to which is here ascribed a saving significance, a redeeming power; yet even this advance lies on the lines of a natural and inevitable development. In this doctrinal advance we may conjecture an influence of Paul on Peter; but even without such an influence, words of Jesus, such as Matt. xx. 28, about the *λύτρον ἀντι πολλῶν*, and still more the institution of the Supper, as well as the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, in which the disciples long since saw the prophetic image of their Master, must have forced the first apostles along this way of knowledge. Yet the author of our Epistle received his most decisive impression, not from the death, but from the resurrection of Jesus. It had begotten him again to that living hope (i. 3) which makes him feel and contemplate the whole Christian life on earth as a pilgrimage (i. 1, 17, ii. 11), a pilgrimage to the true and heavenly home. That living hope

penetrates and dominates his whole Christian consciousness so much, that to him it has become the very foundation of his Christian teaching. Where Paul would speak of faith, Peter speaks of hope (cf. i. 13, 21, iii. 5, 15, etc.). Thus the main feature of the first apostolic Christianity is not less clear here than in James, and in the early preaching of the Acts of the Apostles; in fact, it is clearer than in any New Testament writing, except the Apocalypse. The hopeful outlook to the salvation yet to be revealed, formally outweighs the lofty feeling, which is so powerful in Paul, of possessing the salvation already established. Nevertheless, the moral earnestness of the author avoids an actual displacement of the healthy balance between present and future. That living hope kindled at the resurrection of Jesus is to him living, just for this reason, that it thoroughly sanctifies the earthly life. It is, on its subjective side, the fruit of the experience of a second birth (i. 3), and to preserve this through all the relations and conflicts of the earthly life is the Christian task corresponding to that gift of hope. The author comprehends this task in the idea of sanctification (i. 15), which he makes the fundamental idea of all his exhortations, just as the idea of hope is the fundamental idea of all his consolation. On the other hand, we find no trace formally in his writings of the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith. And thus we may sum up the Petrine conception of Christianity, as it meets us in this Epistle, in the simple proposition: Salvation in Christ is a gracious divine communication of a sanctifying hope. His detailed exposition of this main idea may be considered under the following heads:—

- I. God the Father, and the people of His inheritance.
  - II. The person and sufferings of Christ.
  - III. The pilgrim condition and walk of the Christian.
  - IV. The preaching to the dead, and the judgment of the world.
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## CHAPTER II

### GOD THE FATHER AND THE PEOPLE OF HIS INHERITANCE

#### § 1. IDEA OF GOD

It is a more developed view of the world than that of his early mission preaching, which the mature Peter in his Epistle presents to the already existing Christian Churches. It starts from the eternal purpose of God's love to procure for a chosen people an imperishable inheritance. But by proclaiming, as he does, that this purpose of God's love has fulfilled itself, not in the Jewish people, but in the Christian Church, the whole novelty and greatness of the experience which transformed the apostle from a Jew into a Christian is shown. In the first place, the idea of God, from which he comprehends that purpose, is new. He applies the name Father to God much more abundantly than James, and thereby shows that he is clearly conscious of the Christian distinction which lies in calling on God as the Father (i. 17). The more detailed application is quite after the way of Jesus Himself: God is, in the first place, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (i. 3), then, our Father also (i. 17), finally, the Father simply (i. 2), so that the name becomes a designation of nature. This designation of nature means to Peter, as to Jesus also, that God is absolute goodness and holy love; and this idea of God is developed on two sides, as in the teaching of Jesus, that God is the morally perfect Being, who stands before man as an ideal to be copied (Matt. v. 45, 48), and at the same time that He is the gracious power which comes down to meet man to enable him to reach this his destiny. The first aspect of the idea of God is described by Peter as holiness, the other as mercy or grace; from both, then, flow God's several glorious attributes, which the apostle calls (ii. 9) His *ἀρεταί*, virtues, a name very significant of the absolutely ethical character of his idea of God. The holiness of God (i. 16), related to that righteousness which judges without respect of persons (i. 17), belongs more to the Old Testament circle of ideas than the moral *τελεότης* on which Jesus lays stress, but the sense is certainly the same.

Peter draws from it the same deduction as Jesus from the perfection of God : " Be ye holy ; for I am holy " (i. 16). Mercy (*τὸ πολὺ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος*, i. 3) is related to grace as the disposition of heart to its exhibition, at least *χάρις* throughout is used in the latter sense (cf. i. 2, 10, 13, ii. 19, iii. 7, iv. 10, v. 5, 10, 12).

### § 2. THE INHERITANCE AND ITS TRANSFERENCE TO THE CHRISTIANS

In this holy love of His which is His very nature, God has prepared an imperishable, undefiled and unfading inheritance, which is preserved in heaven in order to be revealed in the last time (i. 4, 5). Angels desire to look into its glory (i. 12), but it is intended for the children of men (ver. 4). Peter might have applied to it the name kingdom of heaven, but only in the onesided future sense, which would not have corresponded to the teaching of Jesus ; or he might have used the kindred term eternal life, which, iii. 7 (*συγκληπονόμους χάριτος ζωῆς*), he actually brings into connection with it. He has preferred the common Old Testament notion of the promise *κληρονομία*, and has thus (as Jesus also does, Matt. v. 4) spiritualised the idea of the land of promise, just as he afterwards spiritualises the idea of the chosen people. Hope is connected by him with this notion of the final incorruptible inheritance from the first, and the hope of this inheritance is indeed the fundamental idea of Christianity. It is the deepest meaning and the highest consecration of the earthly life, and was awakened by God in the children of men long before Christ. For already Sarah and other holy women hoped in God (iii. 5), that is, even the patriarchs had a promise of that eternal inheritance. Afterwards God made it known to the prophets, and though He let them see that they should not themselves behold the works of the Messiah, by which the inheritance was to be secured, they could announce them for a later generation (i. 12). For though the nation in which they lived was chosen and called by God to be His priestly kingdom and His holy and peculiar people, it was not such in reality as yet (cf. ii. 9). On the contrary, when God laid in its midst the foundation-stone of salvation in Jesus the Messiah, it rejected Him (ii. 14), and so it threw

away its title to that eternal inheritance (Acts iv. 11). God has indeed made this Jesus whom He had chosen, and who was dear to Him, the foundation-stone of the spiritual house that is to be built on earth, but for Israel He has made Him the corner-stone on which it is to strike and stumble (ii. 7). And He has laid it that it may be a stone of stumbling and rock of offence (ii. 8); that is to say, the holy and righteous order of the world is perfectly exhibited in the fact that the Jewish nation is now ruined and completes its judgment in this very Jesus Christ, in whom as its deliverer it might have been established. But the prophetic promise, "He that believeth on Him shall not be put to shame" (ii. 6), has not on that account remained unfulfilled. The spiritual house, the temple which God desired to build on this foundation-stone, has arisen, though built of other stones; those who were once not a people and had not obtained mercy, have now been pardoned and made a people of God's inheritance (ii. 10). And so Peter can exclaim to his readers in the heathen lands of Asia Minor: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the virtues of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (ii. 9); that is, all that Israel should have been and was not, all that of which it has become the very opposite by the wickedness of its rejection of Messiah, that you now are in reality the chosen people of God. As already noted above, there can be no doubt that the apostle addresses these words to communities essentially Gentile; not only are Christian Churches made up wholly of Jews reaching from Pontus to Galatia and Bithynia historically inconceivable, but Peter describes his readers as not Jews: *οὐ ποτὲ οὐ λαός, νῦν δὲ λαός Θεοῦ* (ii. 10; cf. iv. 3). That certainly means a great change in the views of the apostle between the days of his first preaching and the days when he wrote this Epistle. But not only had Peter since learned that "with God there is no respect of persons, but in all nations he that feareth God and doeth righteousness is accepted of Him" (Acts x. 34, 35); he must also have learned, with Paul, that only a remnant of Israel would be converted, while the Gentiles in great numbers were entering into the kingdom of Christ. He writes his Epistle, unless we are mis-

taken, after the martyrdom of James at the beginning of the Jewish war, when it had become apparent, even to the ἀπόστολος τῆς περιτομῆς (Gal. ii. 9), that God had withdrawn His choice from the Jewish nation, as a nation, in order to fix it on a new people of God gathered out of all nations.

### § 3. THE WAY OF SALVATION

The readers as formerly heathen were originally little fitted for the position of God's people. Their conduct, received by tradition from their fathers, was vain, that is, morally null; it was a walking in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings and abominable idolatries (iv. 3). They then found themselves in the power of those fleshly lusts which are opposed to the will of God (iv. 2), and war against the soul (ii. 11), that is, are in discord with the inner man. This lets us understand something of the views of the Epistle about the natural sinfulness of man. These are essentially the same as Paul's in Rom. vii., except that Paul never names the higher principle in man ψυχή, but ἔσω ἄνθρωπος or πνεῦμα.<sup>1</sup> But this Petrine anthropology agrees not only with Paul, but also with James (Jas. i. 14, iv. 1), in regarding the power of the σάρξ in man as the real ground of all sin, and deducing from it not merely sensuous vices, but all selfish phenomena—πᾶσαν κακίαν καὶ πάντα δόλον καὶ ὑποκρίσεις καὶ φθόνους καὶ καταλαλίας (ii. 1, cf. with i. 14, ii. 11), where all the sins of the pre-Christian condition are traced back to the σαρκικὰ ἐπιθυμίαι—that appears to have been the common early Christian view. In God's eyes, however, all such natural sins are viewed, according to Peter, from the (Old Testament) point of view as sins of ignorance, as is shown by the expression used in i. 14: ταῖς πρότερον ἐν τῇ ἀγνοίᾳ ὑμῶν ἐπιθυμίαις.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, under the class of mortal sins, which in the Old Testament could not be atoned for or forgiven, is ἀπειθεῖν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ, the conscious rejection of the message of salvation (cf. iv. 17, 18).

<sup>1</sup> ψυχή Peter says with Jesus, Matt. x. 28, xvi. 26.

<sup>2</sup> *ἀγνοία* as designation of the whole pre-Christian condition of the heathen. The same view is similarly, and yet differently, applied in respect of the Jewish nation, Acts iii. 17.

All those sins of ignorance have thus not prevented the merciful God from choosing the readers to share in His eternal inheritance (i. 1), while He has given up to hardness of heart Israel, who rejected her Messiah, who has been made a stone of stumbling (ii. 8). Sinners as such cannot, of course, attain to that inheritance, but only sanctified men (ii. 15, 16), since it consists in communion with the holy God; and so there comes here a description of the way of personal salvation, a doctrine of the way of salvation which in its introductory ideas of calling and election comes into contact with Paul, though it does not advance to his idea of justification; rather with James (i. 18), it makes the second birth the central idea and the starting-point for attaining sanctification. As to the election ascribed to the readers (i. 1), it is undoubtedly not conceived as before the world was, it is a historical election like that of Israel; only Israel as a nation was elected from the multitude of nations, while the Christians, as individuals, are chosen from the mass of the heathen among whom they live. The *kata πρόγνωσιν θεοῦ πατρός*, which is added in i. 2, must have a similar meaning; they are just those who have been chosen because of a divine forethought; God saw their hearts, and His appointment rested on what He saw. For although the foreknowledge in *kata πρόγνωσιν* cannot directly coincide in time with the election in *ἐκλεκτοῖς*, but must express a preliminary condition of it, yet there is, at anyrate, more in it than the self-evident fact that God knows what He does,—an idea which would not even suit i. 20, Acts ii. 23; it expresses a divine foreknowledge, a previous seeing into the heart of the person in question which leads to the resolution to elect him (cf. Rom. viii. 29). But the execution of this thought of distinguishing and electing love consisted for the readers mainly in the fact that God had called them (i. 15),—called them out of darkness into His marvellous light, to inherit His blessing and His glory (ii. 9, iii. 9, v. 10). That took place when, through the Holy Spirit, the glad tidings was proclaimed to them of God's living and eternal word (i. 12, i. 23–25). The fruit of this calling is their regeneration, that inward and fundamental transformation through which a new life has been established in them (i. 3, 23), in conformity with the announcement of

Jesus to Nicodemus (John iii. 3, 5). And the second birth is traced back to the word of God, just as in James, though with a still plainer reference to Jesus' Parable of the Sower, the word of God, that is, as is expressly declared, the gospel preached to the readers (i. 25), is not corruptible but incorruptible seed (Mark iv. 14), through which has been planted in them the germ and the power of a new life (i. 23). From this there follow, finally, the two connected and fundamental features of their Christian position, which are at the same time root ideas of our Epistle, Christian hope and Christian sanctification. For, on the one hand, the readers along with the author are "begotten again to a living hope" (i. 3); the life begotten in them passes beyond the temporal into the eternal, and the earthly existence is glorified with the certainty of a future blessed life. And, on the other hand, the life begotten in them by God is at first an incipient, immature life, which like that of new-born children (ii. 2) needs further development and suitable nourishment. But as a life partly divine, partly human, it can only grow up according to the law: "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (ii. 2, i. 15: *κατὰ τὸν καλέσαντα ὑμᾶς ἄγιον καὶ ὑμεῖς ἄγιοι ἐν πάσῃ ἀναστροφῇ γενήθητε*). In virtue of these two interdependent features of the Christian life the readers are *ἐκλεκτοὶ παρεπίδημοι διασπορᾶς* (*Πόντου Γαλατίας, κ.τ.λ.*), strangers and pilgrims on earth, belonging to a people of God scattered in the lands of their residence. The expressions are borrowed from the Jewish diaspora, the members of which in the Gentile lands were only *παρεπίδημοι*, strangers, not settled citizens; but, as the *ἐκλεκτοί* at once shows, the words are translated from the worldly into the spiritual sense. Christians are strangers and pilgrims upon earth, scattered here and there; they are a select few amongst the multitudes of people of another way of thinking; their real fatherland is in the promised land of the future in which they hope, and they walk even now according to the laws and ordinances of this higher fatherland. The looking to the future which prevails in all the primitive Christianity has been expressed by the aged Peter in the profounder way which we find in his discourses in the Book of Acts, and also in the Epistle of James. But although *σωτηρία* as a negative idea, equivalent to the positive

idea of the *κληρονομία*, is conceived throughout as future, (*σωτηρία ἔτοιμη ἀποκαλυφθῆναι ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ*, i. 5), Peter also recognises that salvation is a present inward possession. It presents itself to him under the idea of the *χάρις θεοῦ*. The grace of God, although still an object of hope, in its perfection (*φερομένην ὑμᾶν χάριν ἐν ἀποκαλύψει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*, i. 13; *συγκληρονόμοις χάριτος ζωῆς*, iii. 7) is also a grace in which the readers already stand (*ταύτην εἶναι ἀληθῆ χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ, εἰς ᾧ στῆτε*, v. 12; cf. iv. 10, v. 5), for they stand *ἐν ἀγιασμῷ πνεύματος*, in the sanctifying element of the spirit of God. What must strike us most in this clear and thorough sketch of the Christian way of salvation and the state of grace is, that the religious aspect in the narrower sense is insignificant compared with the ethical aspect of religion. The notion, so very prominent in Paul, of deliverance from guilt and justification, is not indeed entirely wanting here beside that of regeneration and renewal; in the salvation (i. 2) *ἐν ἀγιασμῷ πνεύματος* is followed by a reference to the *ῥαντισμὸς αἷματος Χριστοῦ*, to which we will have to return in considering the saving death of Jesus. But just as the indication of forgiveness secured in the blood of Christ only follows after an *εἰς ἴπακοήν*, so the excusing and justifying side of salvation in Peter is subordinate to the transforming and sanctifying side; the ethical view of salvation preponderates, just as in James.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE PERSON AND SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST

##### § 1. THE PERSON OF CHRIST

That the entire salvation just described rests on the person and work of Jesus, is a matter of course in the case of an apostle of Jesus Christ (i. 1), and is a common conviction of the first apostles, which we also found indicated and presupposed in the Epistle of James. But, as already noted, the character of Jesus as the Founder of salvation is much more prominent in Peter than in James; this corresponds to the

closer relation of discipleship in which he stood to Jesus from the beginning, and it also corresponds to the growth in clearness of doctrine in the course of the apostolic age, through the influence of Paul. Nevertheless, the Petrine Christology is distinguished, not only from the Pauline, but also from that of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the writings of John, by a preservation of the full early apostolic simplicity. Jesus, in our Epistle, as in the Petrine discourses of the Book of Acts, is simply the chosen and anointed of God. Of course the name Christ has already become a proper name, instead of an appellation, and is therefore, as a rule, added to Jesus without the article, or is even used alone; but the original meaning, the reference in it to the Holy Spirit who filled Jesus, has not been lost, as will be shown. While the name Son is wanting, just as in the early part of the Acts of the Apostles, and is only indirectly suggested in the designation of God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the name of honour, *ο κύριος*, just as in the Petrine discourses, is used (i. 3, ii. 13, iii. 15). But it does not imply, as might appear from the Old Testament quotations in which God Himself is called *ο κύριος*, any transference of the name of Jehovah to Jesus, but just as Peter himself explains it in Acts ii. 34–36, it describes Jesus as the King of God's grace (Ps. cx. 1), as the *ἀρχιποίμην* whom God has given to His people (v. 4). For in every way Peter places the Lord in genuine human dependence upon God. God has chosen Him as the foundation-stone of His house on earth (ii. 6), and has given Him the glory which He possesses in virtue of His resurrection (i. 21). Jesus therefore has not this glory in virtue of an eternal nature, since the very idea of election presupposes a number of similar beings, in this case the whole of humanity, from whom one is chosen. Certainly that choice, or rather the *πρόγνωσις* leading to it, existed already, according to i. 20: *πρὸ καταβολῆς κάσμου*, and so the *προεγνωσμένον* in this passage has been interpreted in the sense of a pre-existence, and appeal has been made for this to the contrast of the *φανερωθέντος* as a coming forth in time from a pretemporal concealment. But this *φανερωθέντος*, as the following δι' ὑμᾶς δι' αὐτοῦ πιστοὺς εἰς θεόν shows, refers not so much to the coming

into the world, as to the coming to light in the world, and the *προεγνωσμένου* cannot express any pre-existence, because in i. 2 it is declared likewise of believers. It means simply that the Messiah, in whom is realised the eternal purpose of God's love, which God had formed when He made the world, was foreseen by God before that creation, and destined to appear in the future. Nor does the expression used in i. 11, *τὸ ἐν αὐτοῖς* (the prophets) *πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ*, imply a pre-existence. The Spirit of Christ, as the wholly historical use of the name Christ in the same verse shows (*προμαρτυρόμενον τὰ εἰς Χριστὸν παθήματα*), is not the spirit proceeding from the pre-existent Christ, an idea that would lack all biblical analogies, but is simply the spirit which afterwards filled the Messiah; it is His spirit, because He alone had it without measure, and had it truly as His possession. What distinguishes Christ from all other men, and makes Him God's chosen and beloved, is in this Epistle, above all, His sinlessness; this is as prominent here as in the Petrine discourses of the Book of Acts, which is an evidence both of the conception of Christ's person as human and of the impression which Jesus made upon Peter. Jesus is "the Lamb without blemish and without spot," who had to give His life for the sinful world (i. 19). "He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (ii. 22); "He died for sin, the just for the unjust" (iii. 18). As in the early apostolic discourses, Acts ii.–viii., the servant of Jehovah in Isaiah, that ideal image of the pious man, is recognised in Him (cf. ii. 22–25). God has poured the fulness of His Spirit into this absolutely pure vessel, and has thus been able to make of this Jesus His *Χριστός*. It may be asked here whether Peter traces back this relation only to the baptism, as in Acts x. 38 (*ἔχρισεν αὐτὸν ὁ θεὸς πνεύματι ἄγιῳ καὶ δυνάμει*), or whether he now traces it back to the origin and nature of Christ's personality. When in iii. 18 it is said of Christ, *θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκί, ζωτοιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι, ἐν φ καὶ τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν πορευθεὶς ἐκήρυξεν*, one cannot really see anything else in the *πνεῦμα* in which Jesus goes to the *πνεύματα*, the departed, than His personal spirit, His inward man, as it awakes to life again after the killing of the *σάρξ*. If we now compare this passage with the expression *τὸ ἐν αὐτοῖς πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ* (i. 12),

it appears almost as if Peter directly conceived the soul of Christ to be the Spirit of God. Such an idea would make us feel the want of a psychological distinction between the human spirit and the divine Spirit, which fills and sways the human; but as a popular expression it would all the more perfectly describe the absolute coincidence of the human and the divine Spirit in Jesus. Paul chooses a similar though more cautious expression, when, in Rom. i. 3, 4, he designates the *πνεῦμα*, which, together with the *σάρξ* makes up the historical personality of Jesus, as *πνεῦμα ἀγιωσύνης*. However that may be, Peter, in describing the *πνεῦμα θεοῦ* as it spoke in the prophets, directly as *πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ*, gives, at the same time, the simplest and most satisfactory expression to the complete spiritual unity of Christ and God. For what more need the Christ of Peter have in order to give to humanity everything it needs for the restoration of its communion with God?<sup>1</sup>

## § 2. SAVING SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SUFFERINGS AND DEATH OF CHRIST

That this one righteous and divine person among the sons of men should suffer the disgrace and torture of the most miserable felon's death, remained for those who had lived with Him in love and faith a riddle which they could not solve until they perceived it in a part of His God-given vocation as Saviour, and indeed the crown and conclusion of it. In his preaching of repentance to the Jewish nation, Peter had been content to view Jesus' death upon the cross as the greatest crime of this nation, and to consider, on the authority of the Old Testament, and in particular of Isaiah liii., this crime as taking place according to the determinate

<sup>1</sup> It is self-evident that the apostle ascribes divine glory to the exalted Christ (cf. i. 11, 21). But that cannot be inferred, as Weiss would have it, from the transference to Christ of a passage in the Old Testament where *κύριος* refers to God, or from the transformation of the expression of Isaiah, *θὸς ἀγιάζειν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις* into *Χριστὸς ἀγιάζειν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις* (iii. 15). Moreover, even the exalted Christ remains under God, who is called the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (i. 1), and the divine *δόξα* does not abolish His original and abiding humanity, especially as that glory is communicated to His own (v. 1, 4, 10).

counsel and will of God. But this counsel and will of God was somewhat obscure so long as it was not also known as a counsel of salvation and a will of love. The apostle, a generation after his first preaching, is in a position to tell the Gentile Christians to whom he is writing something more satisfactory about the sufferings and death of the Messiah, to show them that it contains a source of divine comfort and sanctifying power. He explains the death of Christ to them as a fact of salvation from three points of view, that of example, that of redeeming power, and that of comfort against the sense of guilt. His object is to comfort and strengthen men who are suffering and persecuted although innocent, and the readiest way of doing so is to set before them the example of the suffering Christ. How comforting for innocent sufferers that even He, the most innocent of all, must needs suffer so sorely ; but what admonition it gives at the same time that they should suffer as He did in divine meekness and patience ! "For this is acceptable with God, if a man for conscience' sake endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For even hereunto were ye called : because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow in His steps ; who, when He was reviled, reviled not again ; when He suffered, He threatened not ; but committed Himself to Him who judgeth righteously" (ii. 21–23). It is the same in iii. 17, iv. 1 : "It is better, if the will of God be so, to suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust. Forasmuch as Christ hath suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind : for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin." This simple moral view of the suffering image of Christ stands out nowhere in the New Testament as in our Epistle. It suits a personal disciple of Jesus, and shows the independence of his view of that of Paul. But another thought is conjoined with that of the moral example in the suffering of Christ, the thought of its redeeming power. In the first passage adduced He is said to have suffered ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, and in the second, ἀπὸξ περὶ ἀμαρτιῶν ἀπέθανεν, δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων, ἵνα ἡμᾶς προσαγάγῃ τῷ θεῷ. That is, the suffering and dying Saviour appears in order to lead sinners, estranged from God, back to God. And this appearance is more strictly defined in another

passage as His giving an innocent and faultless life for a ransom : *εἰδότες, ὅτι οὐ φθαρτοῖς, ἀργυρίῳ ἢ χρυσίῳ ἐλυτρώθητε ἐκ τῆς ματαίας ὑμῶν ἀναστροφῆς πατροπαραδότου, ἀλλὰ τιμίῳ ἄλματι ὡς ἀμνοῦ ἀμάρμου καὶ ἀσπίλου Χριστοῦ* (i. 18, 19). Only we must be on our guard against interpreting this laying down of His life for sinners, on the part of the Holy One, in accordance with the traditional theory of substitutionary penal sufferings by which the innocent sufferer delivers sinners from their guilt and punishment, for of this there is nothing in the words. The abstract juridical substitution would require an *ἀντὶ ὑμῶν, ἀντὶ ἀδίκων*; but here we have *ὑπέρ*, that is, not instead of, but for the advantage of. And then he does not speak of a deliverance from guilt or penalty, but, as we have found in Jesus' own words about the *λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν*, Matt. xx. 28, of a redemption from the bondage of sin,—*ἐκ τῆς ματαίας ὑμῶν ἀναστροφῆς*, as it is unmistakably said in i. 8. The same thought recurs with equal plainness in the passage, ii. 24 : *ὅς τὰς ἀμαρτίας ὑμῶν αὐτὸς ἀνήνεγκεν ἐν τῷ σώματι αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον, ἵνα τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἀπογενόμενοι τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ ζήσωμεν οὐ τῷ μάλωπι αὐτοῦ ἴαθητε.* That is, Jesus has taken our sins with Him to the cross, taken them as it were into His death, in order to put them to death, in order to secure our freedom from them to the end that we might live to righteousness, and thus are we healed (morally) "through His stripes." If we now ask how the death of Jesus has or can exercise this emancipating influence, it is clear that the apostle cannot have meant that all men became free from the bonds of sin from the moment that Christ died; all men have not become free, but only believers. What Jesus therefore has created in His suffering and death is not a charm which works of itself, but a power and a possibility for those who let it work on them. This brings us to the fact that this moral deliverance, this influence which redeems in the proper sense of the word, is mediated through the moral impression of Jesus' sufferings and death; and this is confirmed by the consideration that only from this point of view is it possible to explain the connection which exists in the apostle's mind between the redeeming power of the death of Christ and its significance as an example. The suffering of Christ can only work as an example by means of the moral impression which

it makes, and only for those who resign themselves to this impression. But this impression is deepened by the fact that here there is far more than example ; they perceive that this suffering and death are not unconnected with themselves, but are for their sake. The sin of those who murdered Him, and the suffering, sacrificing love by which that sin was borne, have both a reference to themselves. That is an impression which makes sin revolting to susceptible minds, and bursts the bands of lust which sin binds round the heart. What the apostle has in view in the much perverted and yet simple passage, iv. 1, *ο παθών ἐν σαρκὶ, πέπαυται ἀμαρτίας*, is that suffering kills the evil desire and subdues the blaze of selfish, sinful passions that are rooted in the *σάρξ*; and that is true not merely of the effect one's own suffering has on a mind open to God, it is still more true of the effect which the sufferings of another, and especially of one innocent and loving, has when it is accepted for our sake. The suffering and death of a father or a mother whose heart has been broken by an erring child, would be the most powerful means of breaking the evil desire in that child, and rending the bands in which sin held him captive. The apostle manifestly supposed such a connection between the death of Christ and the sins of all men when he wrote that Jesus died *ἀπαξ περὶ ἀμαρτιῶν* (iii. 18). He has borne our sins in His own body to the tree. Though immediately Jesus had borne only the sins of His nation, culminating in its crucifixion of Him, yet the apostle cannot have failed to observe that the nature of the sin that rules the world generally revealed itself as never before in this darkest crime of history, and that Jesus embraced in the suffering and pitiful love with which that sin was borne, not only His own erring people, but the whole of humanity in its sinful ruin. He might and must have said to himself, that Jesus fought through that decisive conflict between the selfishness that rules the world and the love of God that overcomes the world, and triumphed in His death for all time (*ἀπαξ*), and for all the world, as far as men allow this eternal deed to have its influence upon them ; He really gave His life a *λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν* for the moral deliverance of all who believe on Him. But the saving significance of the death of Jesus is not to the apostle exhausted even in

this redeeming power. In harmony with his prevailing mode of thought and the object of his Epistle, in which holiness is supreme, he regards the influence of Christ's death in this direction as all-important, and so he insists upon it continually, alongside of its importance as an example; but he also indicates a power of the "blood of Christ" to deliver from guilt, to stay the accusations of conscience. In the salutation of the Epistle (i. 2), where he calls the *πρόγνωσις* of God and the *άγιασμὸς πνεύματος* the foundation of the Christian position, he then adds to the *εἰς ὑπακοήν* the words *καὶ ῥαντισμὸν αἷματος Χριστοῦ*. This sprinkling with the blood of Christ, reminding us of the Old Testament sprinkling with the sacrificial blood of atonement, can only have independent significance beside sanctification, whose principle is "the spirit," and "the obedience" towards God's commandments in which this sanctification shows itself, if it is referred to the expiation of those arrears which still continue to cleave to the Christian in sanctification and obedience, that is, to the daily forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake. Thus the apostle perceived in the blood of Christ, that is, the self-sacrifice of the Saviour, the pledge of divine forgiveness, an effectual sacrifice presented by God Himself against the daily offences of the believer; but he did not give doctrinal expression to this idea and its connection with the redeeming power of the blood of Christ.

### § 3. OLD TESTAMENT TYPES

These considerations about the saving value of the death of Jesus, and especially that last touched on, have manifestly been developed by the apostle on the basis of the Old Testament types to which his own words allude, and it may be well to glance even now at the Old Testament allusions in order to test our comprehension of his meaning and complete it in this relation. First of all, the expression *ῥαντισμὸς αἵματος Χριστοῦ* unmistakably points back to the sacrifice which concluded the Old Testament covenant (Ex. xxiv. 7, 8). There sprinkling with the blood of the sacrifice followed the people's vow of obedience, just as in our passage the *ῥαντισμός* follows the *ὑπακοή*; and Peter undoubtedly meant

by these two expressions to transfer directly the presuppositions of the Old Testament covenant to his readers as the people of the new covenant (ii. 9). These presuppositions are, above all, obedience to the commandments of God, and, on the promise of this obedience, the assurance of divine forgiveness for the guilt which, nevertheless, is ever being contracted. After the same manner, in His own teaching Jesus had first educated His disciples in the righteousness of God, and then on His way to death He described to them His blood, which He was about to shed, as the blood of a new covenant;—He did not mean that He had to win through this the divine grace and forgiveness which He had proclaimed to them from the beginning as a present boon, but the blood was to be a guarantee of this grace and forgiveness, it was the seal of the new covenant. And there is no doubt that Peter thus conceived of the relation of the *ἱαντισμὸς αἷματος Χριστοῦ* to the *ἀγιασμὸς πνεύματος*, and the new *ὑπακοή* of the believer. A second Old Testament type, in which Peter obtains a view of the meaning of Christ's death, is the Passover lamb referred to in the words, "as a lamb without blemish and without spot." The allusion to this and to the whole Old Testament idea of sacrifice has been disputed; for while the expression *ἀμῷμος* suits the ritual spotlessness of the sacrificial lamb, *ἀσπῆλος* does not, and the Old Testament sacrifice had significance as an atonement but not as a ransom, and the latter is here ascribed to the blood of Christ in the word *ἔλυτρώθητε*. But these reasons are not sufficient to lead us to find in the passage only an allusion to Isa. liii. 7 (as a lamb which is led to the slaughter, so he opened not his mouth). This passage of Isaiah gives prominence only to the quiet lamb-like patience of the servant of God, but not to the spotlessness and the value of his blood (*τιμίῳ αἷματι*). These are features which point back to the Paschal lamb, which, as faultless (Ex. xii. 5), might doubtless be called *ἀμῷμος* (and why not also *ἀσπῆλος*?), and undoubtedly stood in a causal connection with the deliverance from Egypt (*λύτρωσις*), that is, had a redemptive significance. It is possible that the name, "the Lamb of God," for Jesus going to death, which we have also in John i. 29, 37, had passed into the Christian vocabulary, before the composition of the Apocalypse, from a union of the

ideas of Isa. liii. 7 with the Paschal sacrifice, and that our passage rests both on Ex. xii. 5 and Isa. liii. 7. But the reference to the Paschal lamb cannot be excluded, as, in the institution of the Supper, Jesus Himself suggested it to the disciples, and in the "take eat" had represented Himself as the Paschal lamb of the new covenant. If that is so, then we have here again the same logical relation between the reconciling and redeeming power of Jesus as between the *πατισμὸς αἵματος Χριστοῦ* and the *ὑπακοή* (i. 2). For the blood of the Passover lamb, which was to be sprinkled on the doorposts of the house that was to be spared, has unquestionably an atoning significance;<sup>1</sup> but the expiation is only for the advantage of those who have taken into themselves (eating) the sacrifice, and purified their life (by the purging of the leaven). There remains, however, the main significance of the Passover sacrifice, that it delivers from Egyptian bondage, which in the Christian interpretation is, that it redeems from the vain conversation received from the Fathers (i. 18). The most certain and expressive type applied by Peter is undoubtedly that of the suffering servant of Jehovah in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Its application to Jesus and the death of Jesus lies obviously before us in the passage ii. 21–25, in which phrases from Isaiah are interwoven, and the notion of a vicarious penal suffering, which is traditionally connected with the "truly He hath borne our griefs: the punishment was laid upon Him that we might have peace," seem to be necessarily supported by the passage of Peter. The more likely this is, the more worthy of note is the change which Peter has made on the saying, "He hath borne our sins"; it appears here as, "Who hath borne our sins in His own body to the tree." So little does Peter think of a substitutionary penal suffering, to take away our guilt and punishment and not break our sin itself, and so much is the latter to him, the redemption from sin itself, the *ἴνα ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις ἀπογενόμενοι τὴ δικαιωσύνη ζησώμεν* (ii. 24), the main thing, that he changes the prophetic words in that way. Now, from other elements in the passage of Isaiah which he does not quote, and from the whole idea of vicarious suffering, we may infer what is in itself probable, that here, too, Peter thought of an expiation, an act of justi-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Oehler, *O. T. Theol.* p. 541.

fication as well as of moral emancipation through the death of Jesus. But this expiation can only have been thought of by him as the *λύτρον* in i. 21, not as an equivalent which God receives in order to set the guilty free, but as something precious which God gives up in order to deliver the slaves of sin; it is a sacrifice of love offered by God, which, as a matter of course, guarantees forgiveness to those who allow themselves to be freed by it. For expiation in the Scriptures is not a covering up, a making amends, which God demands and accepts, it is an assurance of His forgiveness which He Himself offers, and offers solely to those who turn from their sins to Him. As to the servant of God in Isaiah, the meaning of the prophet is not that God punishes the sins of His people in their ideal representative, for the expression "chastisement," in Isa. liii., is only a poetic expression which cannot be dogmatised about; the Servant of Jehovah is appointed for the purpose of renewing His people. He is to see of the fruit of His suffering and death, to have the strong for a spoil, to heal the moral diseases of His people; and this is just what Peter in his application insists on as the main thing, that we who like sheep have gone astray, are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls (ii. 25). And thus even here we may sum up the apostle's view of the saving value of the death of Jesus in the terse words which he uses of it in iii. 18: "Christ died for sin, the just for the unjust *ἵνα ἡμᾶς προσαγάγῃ τῷ θεῷ.*" To lead us back again into communion with God remains the great work of salvation, and for that two things are required, viz. that we get rid of sin, and that we become sure of forgiveness. Jesus has made both possible to us in His death, and the one not without the other. But Peter, in accordance with his prevailing ethical view, puts the getting rid of sin first, and makes the other subordinate, as the religious condition, and the indispensable condition of that moral result. Attention should also be given to the way in which the Old Testament examples discussed have helped the apostle to understand the New Testament facts; he does not subject these facts to preconceived Old Testament views, but he contemplates the New Testament impressions in the glass of the Old Testament, and so we have in him the reciprocal effects of immediate experience, and the searching of scripture.

Everything that Peter says about Christ's suffering as forming an example, goes back to the direct impression of what he had experienced, though it may be seen that the words of Christ and His institution of the Supper were the starting-point of his consideration. The words of Jesus about the *λύτρον ἀντι τολλῶν* lie plainly at the basis of the statement in i. 18. Jesus' own memorial institution points him back to the Old Testament covenant sacrifice and Paschal lamb, and the picture of the suffering servant of Jehovah immediately confronted him in the Crucified. In all this we recognise the genuine primitive apostle, who may, indeed, have been helped by Paul to make progress in his knowledge, but who has his own independent sources of knowledge, and goes his own way in using them.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PILGRIM STATE AND WALK OF THE CHRISTIAN

#### § 1. THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST AS THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

If the sufferings and death of Christ are to the apostle the one pillar of salvation, the resurrection and exaltation are the other. If the first is the source of Christian sanctification, the second is the source of Christian hope (i. 3). God's raising of Jesus from the dead has not only abolished the shame of His death upon the cross, it has also raised Him to a heavenly glory in which He can complete His saving work begun on earth. The Risen One is gone into heaven (iii. 22), where He sits on the right hand of God, angels, authorities, and powers (the ruling powers of the present order of the world of whom we shall hear more in Paul) being made subject unto Him, and thence He shall soon come again to judge the living and the dead, and to bring His own into possession of their eternal inheritance which is preserved in heaven. But His resurrection has glorious results, not merely for Himself and the future perfection of His own; their present life on earth has through it become different from the life of other men. They are, as the apostle says (i. 3), be-

gotten again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This declaration seems indeed to fit only the apostle's personal experience of Christ's resurrection, while it is said of the readers (i. 23) that they are born again through the living word of God. But the contradiction is only apparent; the word of God would not have regenerated the readers, could not at least have begotten them to a living hope, if it had not had a risen Saviour to announce to them; this is expressed in remarkable phraseology in the passage i. 20, 21: "You who by Him (Christ) do believe in God, who raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God." The centre of gravity of their Christian life is laid, through the resurrection of Christ, in that higher world into which He has entered, and into which they hope to follow Him. Their life on earth has become a pilgrimage to an eternal home which is certain and secured for them. They are but pilgrims and strangers on earth; their true fatherland, their land of promise, lies in heaven (i. 1, 17, ii. 11). But this standpoint of strangeness to the world does not imply a flight from the world or an idle longing, it is the first thing that ennobles, consecrates, and glorifies the earthly life. It inclines men to hold themselves worthy of that high Fatherland, and to walk according to its holy ordinances; the living hope of the heavenly inheritance is only preserved by the continuous work of sanctification. And thus, as the passages just quoted show, the apostle can make this view of life as a pilgrimage, as a living by hope, the direct and essential motive of his exhortations to sanctification, and from it he can portray the Christian moral ideal of life. The life of the Christian is accordingly a life in the word of God, and at the same time in the Spirit, in the Lord, in God; it is a life in hope and faith, and in believing obedience; it is further a life in love and brotherly communion, a life of discipline and of resignation to all natural ordinances of God; finally, it is a life of patience and endurance in suffering. Let us study in these several relations the ethic of the apostle, which grows up freely from the Christian idea, from the teaching of Jesus inwardly digested, and without formally falling back upon the Old Testament law.

### § 2. LIFE IN THE WORD, IN THE SPIRIT, IN THE LORD, IN GOD

The Christian life, in the case of Peter, as in James, is above all a life in the word of God, only the former emphasises the New Testament element more strongly than the latter. Though the word sown in the heart has produced the regeneration of the readers (i. 23), yet birth is only a beginning of life which requires a further development, and for this the word of God is the indispensable nourishment. The apostle compares his readers to new-born children, and the word of God to the pure milk with which they must be fed. He exhorts them after having once tasted of God's goodness to lay aside all that remains of the old man, and to long ever anew for this pure spiritual milk (ii. 1, 2). By expressly describing the gospel preached to them as the means of nourishment for the spiritual life (i. 25), he not only makes it equal to the Old Testament word of God, but actually places it above the Old Testament, inasmuch as he does not ascribe to the latter the power of begetting and nourishing the new life. At the same time he attests the deep and blessed impression which he himself received from Jesus' words and gospel. His praise of the living word which abideth for ever is like an echo of the confession (John vi. 68): "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." But where God's word is, there also is His spirit. The spirit of God is the soul of His word. Those who brought the glad message to the readers have, it is said (i. 12), in a phrase which plainly refers to Pentecost, preached in the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, and therefore the readers also, through their second birth from God's living word, have become partakers of the spirit. "Blessed are you," it is said (iv. 14), with reference to the reproach for Christ's sake, "for the spirit of glory and of God resteth on you." It is worthy of note that Peter has already got beyond the onesided view of the Holy Spirit as a source of inspiration and prediction, and the ethical significance of the spirit as a principle of sanctification has made itself apparent to him, as is attested by the *ἐν ἀγιασμῷ πνεύματος* (i. 2). But the spirit of God is in particular the spirit of Christ (i. 11), and therefore com-

munity of life with the glorified Christ is given with the possession of the spirit. This idea has been denied to our Epistle without reason. We have it in phrases such as iii. 16 (*τὴν ἀγαθὴν ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστροφήν*) or v. 14 (*πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ*), and the idea of the example of Christ, which is also found, does not conflict with it. Christ remains, of course, a historical as well as a glorified personality distinct from the Spirit. As a historical personality He is an example, as a glorified personality He is the object of religious worship (iii. 15, *κύριον δι' τὸν Χριστὸν ἀγιάσατε ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν*, that is, give to Christ in your hearts the honour that is due to Him ; hallow His name) ; but that does not hinder His being thought of at the same time as working in His own by means of the Spirit. And that this is the apostle's meaning is shown by the striking phrase in iii. 21, that baptism saves us *δι' ἀναστάσεως Χριστοῦ*, which has meaning only if it is communion with the life of the Risen One into which baptism translates us. And how could Christians—as is required of them in ii. 5—be built as living stones on Christ the foundation laid by God, if there was not on His part a real life connection between Him and His own ? All this does not hinder him from tracing back the Christian state of grace and life directly to God, just as James does, since word, spirit, Lord, are only God's instruments. It is God who has called the readers to His marvellous light (ii. 9) and His eternal glory (v. 10). In His great mercy God has begotten them again to a living hope (i. 3). It is God's grace in which they stand (i. 13, v. 12), and the God of all grace will set them up, establish, strengthen, settle them (v. 10). Their faith is trust in God, and their hope is hope in God (i. 21); even baptism as *συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα εἰς θεόν* (iii. 21),<sup>1</sup> puts them in an immediate relation to Him ; and since believers call on Him the Holy One as Father, they are,

<sup>1</sup> I am not in a position to explain more satisfactorily than has hitherto been done the obscure expression used of baptism in iii. 21. But whether we render “request of a good conscience toward God,” that is, seeking for forgiveness of sin, or compact, bond of a good conscience with God, or otherwise, baptism is still considered only on its subjective side, and no sacramental doctrine follows from it. For that it saves is not meant literally ; it does not save of itself, but *δι' ἀναστάσεως Χριστοῦ*, that is, the Risen One into whom they are baptized, saves.

as a matter of course, His children—τέκνα ἵπακοῆς (i. 15, i. 14).

### § 3. THE LIFE IN FAITH, HOPE, OBEDIENCE, AND SANCTIFICATION

Faith appears first of all as the subjective principle of Christian life. It appears as such, especially in those passages where, without qualification, and without prejudice to its fundamental significance of "trust," *πίστις* is manifestly used as a general description for the religion of the Christian man. Such are i. 7 (*ἴνα τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως . . . εὑρέθη*), i. 9 (*κομιζόμενοι τὸ τέλος τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν σωτηρίαν ψυχᾶν*), v. 7 (*ῳ ἀντίστητε στερεοὶ τῇ πίστει*). The fundamental idea of "trust" comes out most obviously in the Old Testament quotation (ii. 6, 7), where the point in question is trust in the foundation of salvation laid by God (*πιστεύειν ἐπί . . .*), and then with *ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν* follows the New Testament application in the same sense. Even the characteristic New Testament phrase *πιστεύειν εἰς Χριστόν* is found in the passage i. 8, reminding us of the words of Jesus in John xx. 29, which opposes faith to bodily sight (of Jesus). On the other hand, the oldest synoptic application of the idea of faith, referring it to God Himself (Mark xi. 22; cf. John xiv. 1), comes out in i. 21, which reminds the readers who were formerly heathen that they had become believers in God only through Christ. But we see how primitive and how much belonging to the Old Testament the teaching still is in form, when we note that the conception of faith has not become sufficient for the Christian relation to God, but is variously represented by hope and by obedience, which correspond to the Old Testament dualism of promise and commandment. Hope and faith are indeed related; both are trust in God, but faith refers essentially to an act of divine love that has taken place, while hope is directed to the future. And it belongs to the spirit of his time, which was specially strong in Peter, that he prefers to describe the Christian relation to God as hope rather than as faith. If Paul praises the faith of Abraham, Peter prefers to praise Sarah's hope in God, and that of those like her (iii. 5). The being begotten again

through the resurrection of Christ, for which thanks are given in i. 3, is a being begotten again to a living hope, and i. 21 declares to us how our faith through that resurrection has, as it were, received its crown in hope, "that your faith and hope might be in God." Peter directly sums up in hope the whole of subjective Christianity, when he comprehends the business of the Christian life in the words (i. 13): "Hope to the end (*τελείως*), for the grace that is to be brought to you at the resurrection of Jesus Christ"; or when, in iii. 15, he calls to the Christians who are questioned by the heathen: "Be ready at all times to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you." When, in the passage i. 3, he calls his hope *ζῶσα*, just as, in Gal. v. 6, Paul calls his faith *ἐνεργουμένη*, he seems to mean by the epithet to describe hope as the ruling motive of the Christian life. The passage i. 13–15, at anyrate, in which the summons *τελείως ἐλπίσατε* immediately follows on the exhortation to sanctification, shows that he thinks of hope in this way. With regard to obedience, on the other hand, as an interchangeable expression for faith, the relationship of the two comes out most obviously in the fact that the contrast to *πίστις, πιστεύων*, is throughout not *ἀπιστος*, but *ἀπειθῶν* (ii. 7, 8, iii. 1, 20, iv. 17).<sup>1</sup> But the positive idea, also *ὑπακοὴ, ὑπακοὴ τῆς ἀληθείας*, appears repeatedly as a mark of the Christian condition (i. 2, 14, 22). The Old Testament character of this language comes out still more clearly when Peter calls the Christian a servant of God as well as a child of God (*ώς θεοῦ δοῦλοι*, ii. 16), and when he passes over the love of God, though that was present in the Old Testament, in order to lay stress on the fear of God. "If ye call on Him as Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear," it is said (i. 17); and in the same way, in iii. 2, 15, "fear" (that is, fear of God) is inculcated upon Christians. Of course the fear, as is shown especially by the first passage, is a childlike and not a slavish fear, a fear of God which casteth out the fear of man (iii. 16); and in this sense Jesus also on one occasion commended fear to His disciples alongside of trust (Matt. x. 28).

<sup>1</sup> Only ii. 7, the reading wavers between *ἀπιστοῦσιν* and *ἀπειθοῦσιν*.

It is more in keeping with the New Testament that Peter does not, as already noted, borrow the rule for this "walking in fear" from the Mosaic law, but, just as Jesus does in Matt. v. 45, 46, from the nature of God, which it is the business of a child of God to copy. As children of obedience, he writes (i. 14) like the Holy One, who hath called you, "be ye holy ; for I am holy." The fundamental commandment of sanctification (*άγιασμός*, i. 2) originates here as a summary of the most inward ethics. This sanctification consists, negatively, in the purifying of the soul, in obedience to the truth revealed in God's word (i. 22), in the laying aside of all sinful lusts and fleshly passions, all malice, guile, hypocrisies, envies, and evil speaking (i. 13, ii. 1, 11, iv. 3); and, positively, in the developing of all virtues in which the *ἀρεταί* of God (ii. 9), His glorious ethical attributes, are imitated, and thus are made known (cf. Matt. v. 10); or more briefly, in a *ζῆν τὴν δικαιοσύνην* (ii. 24), where righteousness, as in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 20, vi. 33), is the summary of all that is like God. The apostle has called attention to the way in which the divine original is made vivid and clear to the Christian through the example of Christ, especially on the side of self-denying love, meekness, and submission (ii. 23, iii. 17, 18, iv. 1).

#### § 4. THE LIFE IN CHRISTIAN AND IN NATURAL FELLOWSHIP

The several obvious duties of the Christian in the world grow out of his great obligation to God and the Saviour. As special spheres of duty appear first the Christian community proper, and then the different natural communities ordained by God. The Christians, as children of one Father, form a bond of brotherhood with one another, an *ἀδελφότης* (ii. 17, v. 9): by this name, which excludes everything institutional, theocratic, unevangelic, Peter intends what we call the Church. And he also uses the figure of a temple, a house of God in which the living God has taken up His abode, and in which spiritual sacrifices are offered to Him through Christ :—Christ is its foundation-stone laid by God, and believers are the living stones which are joined to this foundation (ii. 5). In this community of believers brotherly love is the law, and

therefore follows immediately upon sanctification as a first-fruit of the Spirit, which drives out the natural selfishness τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν ἡγνικότες ἐν τῷ ὑπακοῇ τῆς ἀληθείας εἰς φιλαδέλφιαν ἀντπόκριτον (i. 22). It is required that it come from the heart, and be accompanied by peaceableness, sympathy, and mercy (iii. 8); that it be ἔκτενής, unfeigned (i. 22, iv. 8), an attribute in virtue of which it is also able to save an erring brother and cover a multitude of sins (iv. 8; cf. Jas. v. 20; Prov. x. 12). The demand for humility, in virtue of which Christians become able to serve each other, is as emphatic (iii. 8, v. 5). There is here an echo of Jesus' words: "A new commandment give I you, That ye love one another as I have loved you," and "Who among you will be great, let him be the servant of all." Yet, with all their brotherly equality, Christians are differently gifted, and thus are meant for mutual service; and thus it is their duty as each has received his (special) gift of grace that he should use it for others, as a good steward of the manifold grace of God (iv. 10). For example, they ought to use hospitality without grudging (iv. 9); he who speaks for the edification of others should speak as the oracles of God, that is, should see to it that he do not utter his own conceits, but the thoughts of God (iv. 11); he who ministereth should do it as of the ability which God giveth — without vanity and pride (iv. 11). Finally, the community has its regulations, though they are very simple. It is still the community itself and not the officials that is called κλῆρος, God's heritage (v. 2, 3), and the only existing office is that of elder, which, as has been noted, is in a state of transition from a natural to a legal position of honour. The elders are to feed the flock of God, not by constraint, but willingly; there were undoubtedly great burdens connected with the office of administrator; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; not as being lords of the community, but as examples to it (v. 2, 3). The younger are to be subject to them, but finally all are to be subject to one another in humility (v. 5). As regards life in the ordinary relations of society, the fundamental law of honouring every man prevails here (ii. 17), that is, of recognising what God has given him, an individuality and a station of his own. That finds its application, above all, in the

fundamental relation of society, marriage. We see the wisdom and delicacy with which the young Christianity labours to exalt it morally without giving way to a false spiritual zeal. The apostle in presence of the prevailing contempt for women exhorts men to give them, as "the weaker vessel," their own honour—to live with them according to (Christian) knowledge (iii. 7), with respect for their personality, as they also—the women—are fellow-heirs of eternal life. This injunction is strengthened by reference to the fact that the non-fulfilment of this duty of respectful love (*τιμή*) prevents the prayers of the men—that is, makes their worship vain. Just as fine and tender is his injunction to the Christian women, who, undoubtedly more numerous in the Church than men, had frequently to live with non-Christian husbands. He holds up to them the example of the deference which Sarah exhibited to Abraham in calling him lord, and warns them against seeking to convert their husbands with words, with sermonising ;—the best means for that is a pure walk in the fear of God. And the true adornment of the woman is not plaiting of the hair and wearing of gold and brilliance of apparel, but the meek, quiet spirit which adorns the hidden man of the heart with incorruptible beauty (iii. 3, 4). Further, the apostle also speaks of the great and powerful commonwealth of Rome, under whose control the Christian Churches were comprehended ; and what he says here is a fine testimony to the freedom with which the young Christianity from the first rose above the mutinous temper of the Jewish theocracy. The apostle has learned from His Lord and Master to give to Cæsar what is Cæsar's, and to recognise in the political constitution of the heathen world a moral order of God. If he does not, like Paul, directly designate the order of the State as divine, but rather as an *ἀνθρωπίνη κτίσις*, a human creation, yet he regards it as serving a moral end, the punishment of evil-doers and the commendation of them that do well, and therefore one is to be subject to it for the Lord's sake (ii. 13 ff.). Not that the Christian in doing so denies the kingly freedom which as a child of God he enjoys. He is the truly free man who does not use his freedom as a cloak of wickedness, but knows himself to be a servant of God. As such "he honours all

men, loves the brotherhood, fears God, honours the king" (ii. 17). And the king—for this was the name of the emperor in the East—he honours also in his representatives, the governors sent by him as supreme lord, the *ὑπερέχων*, to whom he has transferred a portion of his official authority (ii. 14).

### § 5. THE CHRISTIAN IN SUFFERING

But the Christian in this world finds himself not merely in presence of divine ordinances, but also of a multitude of ungodly systems, against which he has to guard himself by conflict. Many of the readers found themselves in the discredited position of slaves, and therefore in the arbitrary power of their masters, who were not always well disposed, but often the reverse (ii. 18). And that Roman executive power, although not without the consciousness that it had to be a terror to evil-doers and a protection to those who do well, fell far short of its ideal. It was, if we are not mistaken, the time of Nero; and not only did the Christian community and the worship of God, however innocent it was, enjoy no kind of protection, but the name of Christ was one decried (iv. 16), and every possible calumny circulated about it (ii. 12, 15, iii. 16, iv. 14). The atrocities of the emperor towards the community at Rome had not indeed caused a State persecution in the whole empire, but they had everywhere excited the prejudice and hatred of the populace against the Christians as they went their way misunderstood by all (iv. 2–4). Thus a flood of suffering broke upon the chosen pilgrims and strangers scattered abroad, and the special aim of the Epistle is to strengthen them in it. For it is the first care of the apostle that no Christian should suffer for evil-doing. "Let no one among you suffer as a murderer, or thief, or evil-doer, as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but glorify God in this (the Christian) name" (iv. 16). And there can be no more honourable suffering than that which he goes on to advise. "Be not afraid of their terror, neither be ye troubled; but sanctify Christ as the Lord in your heart," that is, consider Him before all as your Lord whom you are to follow in holy awe (iii. 14, 15). "Be ready

always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, but with meekness and fear (of God, iii. 15), having a good conscience ; that whereas they speak evil of your good conversation in Christ, they may be put to shame in that wherein they falsely accuse you " (iii. 16). " Reward not evil with evil, or railing with railing : but contrariwise with blessing ; for thereunto are ye called, that ye should inherit a blessing " (iii. 9). These words, reminding us of known sayings of the Sermon on the Mount, bring us from exhortation to comfort ; and how richly does the apostle contrive to present it ! " Who can injure you," he exclaims, " if ye be followers of that which is good " ; and he adds in Jesus' own words, " If ye should suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye " (iii. 14 ; Matt. v. 10). Slaves especially he exhorts to be subject to their masters, not only to the good, but also to the froward " ; for this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully (ii. 18, 19). It is thankworthy with God ; for—it is said for all—" he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin " ; the suffering quenches the sinful lusts and educates to the following of Christ (iv. 1). Suffering is a fire of purification, in which faith, a more incorruptible good than gold purified in the fire, is tried, and so fitted to attain its goal, the *σωτηρία* (i. 7–9). Christians were not to think that anything strange had befallen them when they suffered innocently (iv. 12) ; the same sufferings come upon their brethren in the world (v. 9), and the same sufferings came upon their Lord and Master. But if the readers are partakers of the sufferings of Christ they should rejoice, because when His glory shall be revealed they also may be glad with exceeding joy (iv. 13). But this is true only when innocent suffering is rightly received and borne ; for in itself suffering may overwhelm the soul and plunge it in despair. " Your adversary the devil goeth about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour " (v. 8). The spirit of the world would fain drive the Christians to despair, and to apostasy from the faith through excess of suffering. Hence the closing exhortations as to the way in which the Christian is to bear suffering, and as to the virtues connected with it. (1) Resignation : " Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you

in due season" (v. 6). (2) Vigilance, circumspection, and bravery: "Be sober, be vigilant, gird up the loins of your mind with soberness" (cf. Luke xii. 35; Matt. xxvi. 41); "resist the tempter, firm in the faith" (v. 8, i. 13, v. 9). (3) Joyful trust in God and calm continuance in the doing of His will: "Cast all your care on Him, for He careth for you" (v. 6); they who suffer according to the will of God are to commend their souls to the faithful Creator (who will not faithlessly abandon His creatures) in well-doing (iv. 19). "And He, the God of all grace, who has called them to His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will, after they have suffered awhile, make them perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle them" (v. 10). The whole power of the young Christianity to overcome the world lies in these simple exhortations and words of comfort of the apostle.

## CHAPTER V

### THE PREACHING TO THE DEAD AND THE JUDGMENT OF THE WORLD

#### § 1. THE SPHERE OF HOPE

The speedy and glorious return of Christ for the redemption and beatification of His own, is, of course, the background of these exhortations and connections. But we would err if we expected that the hope of Christendom extended only to the deliverance of its own allotted number of members among the thousand times ten thousands of humanity. Its hope goes further; there appears in our Epistle a peculiar tenet about a work of salvation which Christ performed for the departed after He had given up His life for the living; and this remarkable tenet, with which we close our consideration of the Epistle, throws an unexpected light on the whole idea of the judgment of the world. But the obscurity of the words in question demands a searching discussion.

#### § 2. THE PREACHING TO THE DEAD

After the announcement of the approaching judgment of the living and the dead by Christ in iv. 5 (*έτοιμως ἔχοντι*

*κρίναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς*) the apostle (ver. 6) continues : " For, for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." Here, therefore, is mention of a preaching of salvation to the dead ; for the *εὐηγγελίσθη* allows us only to think of a preaching of salvation not of a preaching of judgment, and besides, the *ζῶσιν δὲ κατὰ θεὸν πνεύματι* puts the redeeming object beyond all question. But this brief and great utterance points back to a more detailed and yet more obscure passage (iii. 18 f). Here, after mention of the saving death of Jesus, it is further unexpectedly said : *θανατώθεις μὲν σαρκὶ, ζωποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι, ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν πορευθεὶς ἐκῆρυξεν, ἀπειθήσασιν ποτε, ὅτε ἀπεξεδέχετο ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ μακροθυμία ἐν ἡμέραις Νῶε, κατασκευαζομένης κιβωτοῦ, εἰς ἣν ὀλίγοι, τοῦτ' ἔστιν ὁκτὼ ψυχαὶ διεσώθησαν δι' ὑδατος* ; whereupon follows an interpretation of the water of the Flood as typical of the saving water of baptism, with a further reference to the resurrection and present glory of Christ. In the first place, the connection of thought in this passage is difficult ; the whole saying in reference to the preaching of Christ to the spirits appears at first sight to be a departure from the path that he is following, which he regains by his comparison with baptism followed by the reference to the resurrection of Jesus. On a closer examination, however, we discover a thread of logical connection ; the paragraph starts from the fact that to suffer for well-doing and not for evil-doing is not anything that man need fear (ver. 17), and in support of this is brought forward the highest example (ver. 18). Christ could indeed be killed according to the flesh, but He came forth from death in such a manner that He was able to be the author of blessing even to the departed spirits, and through resurrection, for the salvation of His own, to enter into the highest glory. If this is the right connection, then it favours the view that *ζωποιηθεὶς πνεύματι*, which forms the second difficulty in the passage, is something falling between death and resurrection. The words are frequently applied to the resurrection itself by making use of the Pauline idea of the *σῶμα πνευματικόν*. But apart from the fact that this idea is nowhere in our

Epistle, it is very improbable that an apostle, who believed in the reanimation of the crucified body of Jesus, should have described the resurrection of the Lord in such words as seem to deny the corporeity of the resurrection—*ζωοποιηθεὶς πνεύματι*. Still more improbable is it that he meant the resurrection here, and yet in the next words regarded it as not yet having taken place; for it cannot be disputed that in the following words, *ἐν φ (πνεύματι) καὶ τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν ἐκήρυξεν*, Christ is thought of in a condition analogous to that of the departed spirits, that is, in a disembodied state between death and resurrection.<sup>1</sup> Manifestly the apostle in the *ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι* following on the *θανατώθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ*, is speaking of something which immediately followed the moment of death; he had in his thoughts either the natural reawakening of the soul from the darkness of the death conflict, or a supernatural reanimation of His spiritual nature, by which Christ was immediately in a position to act on others. That is, he places the preaching of Jesus to the spirits in a point of time when Jesus Himself is a departed spirit, in the hours between His death and His resurrection, when, according to God's decree, He went (*προευθεῖς*) whither the souls of the departed go, and so naturally sojourned among the dead. But if that is so, why is His preaching of salvation addressed only to those who were surprised by the Flood in their unbelief, and not to the great mass of those who had departed before Him? This is the third riddle which the passage presents, and it is usually got over by the suggestion, that the contemporaries of Noah are brought forward by way of example, in order to lead us from the Flood to baptism, of which it was made a type; but the dead in general are in iv. 6 thought of as receiving the preaching of salvation. The latter is undoubtedly correct, for immediately after the *κρίναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς* it is impossible to attach any importance to the want of the article in *καὶ νεκροῖς εὑγγελίσθη*, and a limitation of the idea to some of the dead is not found in it. But that in no way justifies the naming of the contemporaries of Noah alone in

<sup>1</sup> Against Weiss, who seeks to make *ζωοποιηθεὶς πνεύματι* refer to the resurrection, but refers the following words to the intermediate state between death and the resurrection.

iii. 18, the less so that the mention of baptism is so incidental that the Flood may indeed have led the writer to think of baptism, but not baptism here of the Flood. We must rather assume that the contemporaries of Noah were regarded by the apostle as the most hopelessly lost of the sinners of antiquity, so that Christ's preaching of salvation to them appears as something quite special, a surpassing act of mercy, and therefore the extension in iv. 6 of this mercy to the *νεκροί* in general becomes self-evident. In the *φυλακή*, in which the contemporaries of Noah find themselves, we have without doubt a representation, not of Hades generally, but of a quite special place of punishment in Hades, the dark prison to which are already committed those who have received sentence, the condemned. That alone would correspond to the biblical view in general, and in particular to that of our apostle. The contemporaries of Noah represent the depth of the degeneracy and ruin of the primitive world, a corruption which made God repent that He had made man, and called forth a divine judgment of extermination, the like of which will not take place till the end of time. The apostle looks upon the Flood as the judgment of antiquity, and therefore the type of the final judgment of the world. And thus it is evident that what the death of Jesus accomplished for those already judged among the departed has not been withheld from the departed in general, as the second passage (iv. 6) presupposes. Thus from all the obscurities of this remarkable utterance the bright thought stands out, that the mercy of God revealed in Christ and Christ's death is not limited to the world of the living, but reaches beyond it into the quiet of that other world of the departed, and is made manifest in it by Christ Himself. What seems strange to us in Peter's expression of this idea is the apparently fabulous and fanciful nature of the representation, which suddenly appears here and here only in the New Testament; the question seems to be insoluble from what source Peter got his mysterious information. And yet we feel from his words that they present nothing completely new to the first readers, but allude to what is already familiar. We should not forget that our New Testament Scriptures present only a small part of the rich world of thought which early Christian prophecy brought

to light. Even the legendary passage Matt. xxvii. 52, 53, according to which, at the death of Jesus, the gates of Hades were opened for the pious of the Old Testament, shows that the effect of Christ's death on the circle of the departed was peculiarly a subject of conjecture. And the question as to the fate of the great army of the departed, who on earth were never touched even by the hope of the glad message, was well worthy of the reflection of an apostle. It was no greater advance for Peter to extend the salvation in Christ from the living to the dead, than it had once been to carry it beyond the Jews to the Gentiles. He learned then "that God is no respecter of persons" (Acts x. 34, 36); and if he asked himself whether that applied also to the dead of old times, the spirit of prophecy which was in him might well have answered in such forms as were natural to him, and given him the reply which appears in his Epistle.

### § 3. THE JUDGMENT OF THE WORLD

That Christ, who brought the message of salvation to the living and the dead, is also the appointed Judge of the living and the dead, is undoubtedly the presupposition of the passage iv. 5, 6, for it turns to speak once more of Christ's preaching of salvation to the dead, after saying that He stands ready to judge the living and the dead. The words have, indeed, been referred to God Himself, because it is said of Him in i. 17 that He judges every man without respect of person; but that Christ expected soon to return is meant by ἐτοιμῶς ἔχων, is suggested not only by the common teaching of the whole New Testament about Christ's office of Judge of the world, but it follows also from the inseparable connection between the judgment of the world and the reappearance (*ἀποκάλυψης*) of Christ for the deliverance and glorification of His own, which reappearance is so emphatically promised in our Epistle (i. 7, 13, iv. 13, v. 4; cf. iv. 7, 17). That this judgment of the world is placed at a particular, and, indeed, at no distant point of time, is due to the representation found in the Old Testament, from which Peter departed as little as any of the apostles. But his ideas of the judgment of the world are somewhat different from those which are traditionally im-

ported into the New Testament, that it has only to pronounce believers blessed and condemn unbelievers. First of all, he relates the approaching judgment of Christendom. "The time is come," he says (iv. 17), "that judgment must begin at the house of God," that is, at the Church of the believers. He looks upon the momentary storms of history as examples and beginnings of the approaching judgment, in which lies a presentiment of the fact that the judgment of the world does not begin only at the close of its history, and he relates these beginnings of judgment to the communities of believers by requiring of them always purification and consecrating perfection, that they may be worthy of the eternal inheritance and crown of victory (i. 4, v. 4). Faith must be purified in the fiery furnace of affliction like gold in the fire (i. 7, iv. 12), that it may be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ (i. 7). But this already suggests that the judgment includes a saving influence; and, as is shown by the passage iv. 6, the apostle applies this idea to unbelievers also. It is usually said: The gospel must be preached to the dead also, in order that, in case of their rejecting it, they may commit the mortal sin on which then follows the righteous judgment of eternal condemnation. But Peter does not thus speak, "For, for this cause was the gospel also preached to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." The end at which God aims is not their condemnation, but their salvation (John iii. 17); and the judgment of death executed on them, though it were so clearly a penal judgment as the Flood, is no obstacle to that. On the contrary, a condemnation which is yet to result in salvation cannot have any other meaning than to chasten and purify; and when the apostle expressly asserts this in the case of believers, and assumes it in the case of the godless of the past, is it possible that he excluded it in the case of the unbelievers of his own day, who he expected would be speedily overtaken by the final judgment? As surely as he regarded the Flood as a type of the final judgment, so surely was the contrary his opinion. Yet in iv. 5 he speaks of the approaching judgment of the living and the dead, quite in the same way as in ver. 6 concerning the judgment already passed upon the dead, which

has for its aim that they *κατὰ θεὸν ζῶσιν πνεύματι*. In what state the approaching judgment finds men, whether Christian or unchristian, children of obedience or children of disobedience, certainly appears to him a very important matter, and we are perfectly conscious of that when in the passage about "judgment beginning at the house of God" he goes on to say: "But if it first begin at us (the judgment), what shall be the end of those who obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous (pious) are scarcely saved (through the fire of the judgment), where will the ungodly and sinner appear?" (iv. 17, 18). Yet it would be an error if we were to understand from this the eternal condemnation of all those who found themselves in opposition to Christ then; the remembrance of the divine treatment of the contemporaries of Noah tells us something different. It says: If the Judge of the world were to appear to-day, He would once more, as then, bring a terrible judgment to the *ἀπειθοῦντες*. While believers would inherit eternal life, these would be given over to death, and committed to the dark *φυλακή*, perhaps for immeasurable ages. But that would be *ἴνα κριθῶσιν μὲν κατὰ ἀνθρώπους σαρκί*; *ζῶσιν δὲ κατὰ θεὸν πνεύματι*, and yet to them as dead the gospel would be preached. Or otherwise, what meaning would then be in the comparison of the Flood with baptism, or the emphasis put upon the fact that through it only eight souls were saved and all the rest condemned? In connection with the extension of the gospel of grace to the latter, at least, it can only mean that in like manner even now they are only few in number who in the approach of the last judgment are sheltered through baptism in the saving ark of God, while the great mass of men will be devoured by His judgment. But all those, who as yet have not been brought by baptism into saving communion with the Risen One, are not on that account for ever lost. How loving and large-hearted are the contemplations of the apostle concerning a world that was engaged in the most bitter persecution of his brethren of the faith, contemplations which Christendom even till to-day has forgotten! But they will surprise us the less in a personal disciple of Jesus, as we have already found them indicated in prophetic words of the Master Himself.

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